

Friday 6 June 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We would like to update you on the Habs Hubs project. We are also taking this opportunity to address some of the most frequently asked questions from both current and new families. While this letter is detailed, we want to ensure you are fully informed.

### About the Habs Hubs service

The Habs Hubs initiative is a new service designed to allow our youngest students to use the existing home-to-school coach network. Carefully selected stops—referred to as Hubs—are being introduced across several routes. These stops have been chosen with particular attention to the safety of accompanied students.

The Habs coach network is the largest dedicated home-to-school coach service in the country, serving over 170 stops daily, across 81 routes and with up to 34 coaches out at any given time. We operate 81 coach movements in and out of school each day—equating to more than 13,000 journeys per academic year. By extending this established network to include Reception to Year 2 students, we can offer families a reliable and cost-effective travel option.

While our long-term goal is to make as many stops available as possible to all year groups, this will take time due to the complexities involved with incorporating the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework with the Habs existing home-to-school network. It is imperative a solid foundation is established for future expansion.

Therefore, we are implementing a phased rollout to ensure safety and compliance. Initially, some families may need to travel to reach their nearest Hub stop but we are working to minimise this by expanding the number of routes that include a Hub stop as quickly and safely as possible.

When designating a Hub stop, we must consider several factors, including accessibility for Reception to Year 2 families and compliance with the EYFS statutory framework. EYFS requires that an adult must accompany students for safety reasons. Without this supervision, the Hub service cannot operate.

The [Terms of Service](#) for the coach network are available to view online.

### June 2025

With the introduction of the trial this week, we are now taking Hub bookings for the **St Albans Ashley Road** stop. To request a ticket, please complete the [online booking request form](#). Tickets booked now will be valid until the end of the current academic year. Please note that, for safety reasons, we are unable to accommodate ad-hoc bookings for Hub passengers.



## September 2025

The following Hub stops will be available to book for travel from September 2025. The new Hub service will begin on **Monday, 15 September 2025**. We are intentionally starting in the second week of term to give new students time to settle into school life.

Route (AM/PM)	Stop Name	AM Time	16:15 Estimated Time of Arrival
F03 / FF03	Southgate Cherry Tree	07:15	17:05
	Hampden Square Osidge Lane	07:20	17:00
	Osidge St Mary's Church	07:23	16:57
	New Barnet Station	07:30	16:50
	High Barnet Station	07:35	16:45
F04 / FF04	Chalk Farm Station	07:15	17:11
	Belsize Park	07:18	17:08
	Whitestone Pond	07:25	16:59
	HGS Market Place	07:35	16:49
H15 / HH15	St Albans Ashley Road	07:45	16:51

We will contact all families shortly with instructions on how to request tickets for September travel.

## Future Development

The Habs Hubs project will continue to expand throughout the new academic year. As new stops are added to existing and new routes, we will notify families when bookings become available.

Proposed future Hub stops include:

- Leverstock Green
- Rickmansworth Station
- Harrow-on-the-Hill
- Willesden: Walm Lane
- Stanmore: Wemborough Road
- Radlett Post Office

These locations have been identified and prioritised based on family feedback and current route capacity.

## LittleHabs

Feedback from LittleHabs families has strongly supported integrating younger students into the main coach service. This change offers a more streamlined experience for families with children in multiple year groups and provides a more economical fare structure.

As mentioned in previous communications, we understand that some families are happy with the current LittleHabs service and would like for it to continue. However, due to the number of families transitioning to the new Hub model, maintaining the current LittleHabs routes is not financially viable.

The physical constraints of the Habs campus and the operational demands of running multiple services simultaneously mean we cannot continue to offer both services while maintaining safety and affordability. Therefore, we have made the difficult decision to retire the LittleHabs service at the end of the Summer Term 2025.

The introduction of Hub stops on routes F03 and F04 ensures that families currently using LittleHabs will have access to a nearby Hub stop. This also allows families with children in

Year 3 and above to use a single stop. Furthermore, the new service offers reduced fares compared to LittleHabs and more flexible booking options for those not using the service daily.

We appreciate your patience and continued support as we work to expand and improve travel options for our youngest students. We will keep all Habs families updated as the Hub service develops.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Joanna Meaden  
**Head of Commercial Operations**

Ms Emma Summers  
**Transport Manager**

---

### **Habs Hubs - FAQs**

Whilst this list is not exhaustive, it covers a combination of background information and answers to the most common queries we have received. We will continue to add to this list as the project develops and will publish updated version periodically.

**Q: *What is a Hubster?***

A: This is the term we use for a passenger in Reception to Year 2 who travels on the coach service.

**Q: *What is a Hub Hero?***

A: This is the term we use for the adult who is travelling with the Hubsters.

**Q: *Why do you only allow Reception to Year 2 students to use Hub stops? Why can't they use all stops on the coach network?***

A: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework requires that an adult must accompany students on the coach for safety reasons. Habs' DSL view, which has been backed up with legal advice, is that because the home-to-coach service is organised by Habs Elstree Schools, the coaches technically fall under the Early Years Foundation Stage definition of a 'setting'. This means EYFS regulations need to be adhered to on the coaches and this includes students being able to access a paediatric first aid trained adult. As such, for a Hubster to travel on a Habs home-to-coach service coach, there legally needs to be such a trained person. This is not something that is possible to provide on all routes at this time. Whilst we have Habs staff travelling on the home to school coach service, this is not the case for all routes and stops. We can only offer a Hubs service where there is an adult travelling on the coach.

**Q: *Why is there Hub stops and not Hub routes?***

A: As above, for our Hubsters to travel on the home-to-coach service there needs to be a paediatric first aid trained adult on board (a Hubs Hero). Heroes themselves may be home-to-coach using staff, in which case they have their own stop at which they alight. Also, this is a new service where safety has to be paramount. Whilst we may be able to add stops as the service grows, it needs to be done in a managed way, from a solid foundation. As above, Hubs have been carefully selected based on the listed criteria.

**Q: *I have a coach that goes past my house – why can't my child use that coach?***

A: The size of Habs home-to-coach network means there is an element of routes overlapping. But when coaches travel the same road, they don't always stop at the same stops. This means it is feasible there are two coaches on the same road, but only one may have a Hero travelling and only coach routes that have a Hero travelling on them can be included in the Hub service – see "Why aren't Hubsters able to use every stop?" above.

**Q: *Why can't I use a closer coach stop?***

A: Please see "Why aren't Hubsters able to use every stop?" above

**Q: *Why is my old LittleHabs stop not a Hub stop?***

A: Many of the LittleHabs stops were brought into service specifically for the LittleHabs routes, serviced by smaller vehicles, and are not included on the main home-to-school coach network.

**Q: *If my child travels on the afternoon Hub service, what do they do after school?***

A: All Hubsters enjoy our excellent after school care before they board their coach. This gives you child time to relax, play, or have their snack. After school care is not part of the academic day and can encourage children to play and form social groups.

**Q: *Can Hubsters use the late coach?***

A: Hubsters can only travel on the morning and 16:15 coach services.

**Q: *Do I need to commit to using the Hub service every day?***

A: No, but you must commit to the same weekly travel pattern.  
For example, you may choose to use the service each Monday and Wednesday morning and Friday afternoon. The key is that the days and times your child travels are the same every week, as this information is essential for us to ensure we have Hero provision to ensure EYFS safety requirements are met. Ad-hoc travel is not available on the Hub service.

**Q: *Why is there a surcharge for Hub passengers?***

A: The administrative surcharge contributes to the administration of the service and provision of adult supervision on the coach.

**Q: *Do Hubsters need a car seat?***

A: Children are not required to have a car seat on a coach by law, but you may choose to provide a booster seat or seatbelt adapter for your child's comfort. Please note that full car seats cannot be used. ISO-FIX points are not available on the coaches and given the size, children will be unable to carry them on and off the coach.  
Storage for booster seats will be made available at the Coach Park.

**Q: *Is there reserved seating for Hubsters?***

A: Whilst we do not reserve specific seating for passengers, we prioritise the front two rows of the coach for use by Hubsters and Heroes.

**Q: *Can Hub families use the SchoolBusTracker app?***

A: Yes! As the Hub stops are included on the main coach routes, the app will allow you to track a single coach for all your travelling children.

**Q: *What will happen if I am not at the stop in time to meet the coach?***

A: If there is no authorised adult at the stop to meet a Hubster from the coach, the Hero will keep the Hubster on the coach with them and instigate their contact procedure to ensure the Hubster is met. The Hero will never alight a Hubster without an authorised adult at the stop to meet them.

**Q: *My Hubster has a sibling in the Senior School. Do they still need an adult to travel with them?***

A: Arrangements may be available to families of pupils in Year 1 or Year 2 (Reception children are not included due to EYFS rules) with siblings in Year 10 or above to be their sibling's Hero. This is at the discretion of the School Head and must be agreed at least 2-weeks in advance of travel.