

Durham School Parking System FAQ

What is the purpose of the new parking system?

The new parking system is designed to ensure that we have safe and available car parking at Durham School. This will benefit pupils, parents, staff, and other legitimate users. It aims to prevent unauthorised use of the car parks, which creates a crowded and unsafe environment for pupils and other users.

When is it in operation?

The parking arrangements are in operation 24/7, 365 days a year. These restrictions are in place to ensure that only members of the Foundation community or bona fide visitors park at Durham School, enhancing safety and better management of the car parks.

The system will be fully installed and operational on or shortly after 28 January 2025. Clear signage with terms and conditions will be on display throughout the Durham School carparks (The Quad, The Vallance Drive, Caffinites and Poole).

Parents are allowed a 30-minute grace period for dropping off or picking up pupils.

If you arrive early or are going to stay longer, please visit reception or the Orangery to sign in. This is important to support the safeguarding of our pupils.

While the restrictions are generally continuous, they are suspended for key school events such as parent evenings, open mornings, and end-of-term or half-term pick-ups.

What are the pick-up arrangements for parents?

To facilitate pick-ups, we have extended the grace period to 30 minutes. This should provide ample time for parents to drop off or pick up their children without any inconvenience. We appreciate that you may wish to park earlier than this. In which case, please visit the Orangery café, open to parents 15.00-17.00 each day. In the café, there will be a sign-in point for you to register your parking for free.

Do I need to register for each stay longer than 30 minutes?

Yes, you must register your vehicle if your stay exceeds 30 minutes. You don't need to register within the first 30 minutes, but you must register before you leave the specific car park. You can do this using the sign-in points at reception or the Orangery. QR codes will also be available at events and fixtures for easy registration. By registering you will be covered for the duration of your visit (until your vehicle leaves the car park).

What about large-scale events and fixtures?

For events or fixtures, they can sign in using a QR code. Parking restrictions will be lifted for large-scale events, such as at the end of term. This will be made clear before this event.

What happens if a trip is late back?

Please stay parked up. The returning minibus will have a QR code in its document folder that you can scan to register. Staff organising trips using other forms of travel will have a QR code as part of their trip folder that they will share with those waiting to collect.

Is this system being implemented to generate revenue?

The system is not intended to generate revenue for the Foundation. Our primary goal is to ensure that parking is accessible for parents and other authorised users and to maintain car park safety. Out of term time, we will be able to modify parking to enable some public parking, which will generate a small surplus, but this is secondary to the primary purpose of improving car parking for parents.

Why are we encouraging parents to visit the coffee shop if they arrive early?

To help reduce air pollution and fuel consumption, we encourage parents who arrive early for pick-up to turn off their engines and visit our coffee shop, which is open from 15.00 on weekdays and during sports fixtures. It's a comfortable space where you can relax or catch up on work while staying warm, eliminating the need to idle your vehicle. This small change makes a big difference in creating a cleaner, healthier environment for our school community. We appreciate your support and look forward to welcoming you inside. For information on the impact of idling, please see RAC Advice on Idling <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/emissions/idling/>

Do we have to pick up pupils at 16.20?

All Houses remain open until 18.30, providing safe, warm places where pupils can relax or complete their prep after school. For those who can, delaying pick-up until around 16.45 or 17.00 can help reduce congestion and waiting issues. Pupils have the option to stay in their Houses, work or take part in a range of after-school activities available to pupils between 16.30 and 17.30. By picking up even a few minutes later, you can often swing in, collect your child, and leave without the hassle of waiting. Of course, we understand that some pupils have other commitments, but many may find this option helpful on some days.

Will pupils know?

We have asked House Staff to brief all pupils that they should leave Houses promptly (at the time they have arranged with their parents (see above)) to be picked up on time.

Why wasn't there more consultation about the new system?

The decision to implement the new parking system was primarily driven by the need to enhance safety and security within the car parks. Previous feedback from the school community, including many parents, highlighted recurring issues with parking misuse. Ensuring a safe environment for parents, staff, and pupils was a top priority, necessitating a swift and effective solution.

Are you open to feedback?

We are always keen to receive constructive feedback. In response to the letters and comments from social media, we have reviewed arrangements and extended the grace period to 30 minutes per visit and delayed the implementation until all cameras are installed, which will be completed by the end of January, pushing the start date back some three weeks.

Who is running this system?

We have partnered with Creative Car Parks to enhance the management of our parking facilities and ensure a more positive experience for all users. Creative Car Parks' fully managed services are designed to increase space availability and reduce nuisance parking, making it easier for parents, staff, and visitors to find suitable parking when needed. Their innovative approach not only improves the overall flow of traffic and accessibility but also helps create a safer and more orderly environment. This means there is no added administrative overhead for the Foundation.

How has the system been financed?

There is no cost to the Foundation for the installation of this system, and while we will retain a proportion of the car parking charges, we do not receive any of the income from fines.

What happens when reception is closed?

For events and activities that extend into the evening, QR codes will be made available. You can also register using the form on the parents' hub – <https://hub.dcsf.org.uk>

Fines and Appeals

Creative Car Parks have a tried and tested appeals service, and you should contact them in the event of wishing to dispute a Parking Charge Notice. Fines can be up to £100 so we would encourage all users to abide by the terms of the car parks, and if you are going to be staying longer than 30 minutes, sign in at reception, the Orangery or use a QR code.

Will parents, pupils and staff be exempt from fines?

To ensure the effectiveness of the new parking system, the same rules must be consistently applied to everyone, including staff, parents, and pupils. The system is designed to maintain fair access and prevent misuse, which means that fines will be issued to any individual who uses the car parks inappropriately. This approach ensures that parking spaces remain available for those who genuinely need them and reinforces the importance of adhering to the guidelines.

Someone on the WhatsApp Group said...

We welcome the feedback received through the parent WhatsApp Groups. That said, a small number of comments seem to erroneously link the introduction of a parking management system with the introduction of VAT on fees, the need to generate additional revenue, or some other operational grievance. None of these is the case. The introduction of a parking management scheme is something we have been working on for some time, and is focused around pupil safety and safeguarding.

What if the system does not work?

If the system fails, legitimate users will not be penalised. Backup systems will be in place.

What if I need additional assistance?

We recognise that some people will need extra time or assistance when parking. Please contact us directly at reception@dcscf.org.uk and we will try and accommodate you.

How does the system work for external users?

For non-school purposes, all visitors should use the "RingGo" service to pay for parking as indicated on the signage. The timing for public use is limited, and it will always be more cost-effective to use local public parking.

How does the system work for external lettings?

Parking arrangements for lettings will be made on a case-by-case basis. Lettings will inform their patrons of these arrangements.

What about Chorister pupil parking?

All Chorister parents have access to free pick-up and drop-off permits for on-street parking at the start and the end of the school day.