Vectare | by faria Education Group

vectare.co.uk

Admissions Guide

School Transport. It's an Admissions Opportunity.

Your bus routes shape who can apply, who chooses you and who stays. This guide shows admissions and marketing teams how to put them to work.



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Every Family Weighing Up Your School Is Also Weighing Up the Journey

For many families, the first question isn't about your curriculum. It's how their child would get there.

Open days, prospectuses and campus tours all sell what happens inside your school. The journey there rarely gets a mention.

Families think about it from the start. If nobody at home can manage drop-off and pick-up, the school comes off the list, however good it is. They don't tell you. They just don't apply.

In a February 2026 Schoolsmith survey of 986 UK parents, location was the leading factor in choosing a prep school. You can't move your school. You can change how far your routes reach.

> *"Transport is two things for a school: an operational necessity and an admissions opportunity. Most schools get the first right."*
>
> *Alex Targett*
> Global Director, Growth, Vectare



For younger children, every school journey depends on an adult.

Every Place Counts

More schools are competing for fewer families. There are now over 15,000 English-medium international schools worldwide (ISC Research), and in many countries each year group is smaller than the last. Families you can't reach are families you can't recruit.

That's what this guide is about:
how admissions and marketing teams can make transport part of the case for their school.

Your Bus Routes Are Already an Admissions Page

Where does your website keep its transport information? At many schools, it sits under Admissions.

That's no accident. Families look for it while they're still deciding. Every route map, timetable and booking page is answering a question they haven't asked you yet.

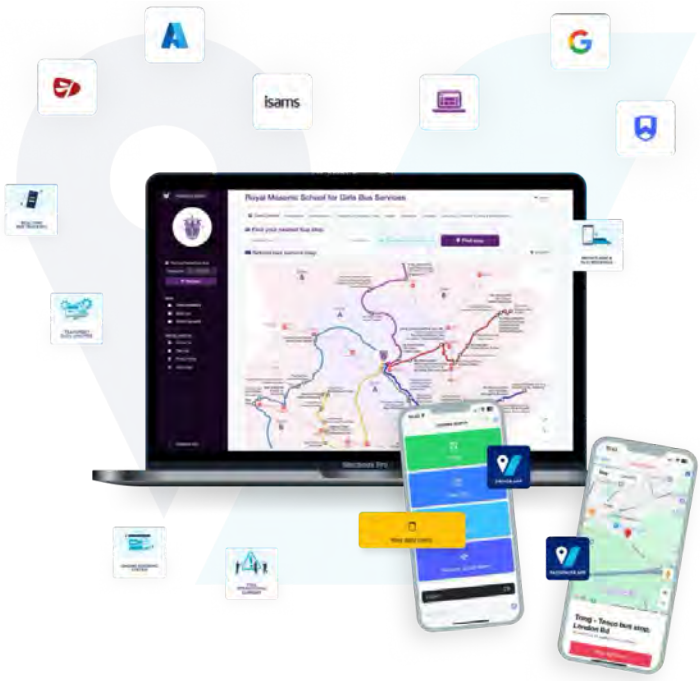
What Families See, and What They're Really Asking

- **A route map:** Can my child get here at all?
- **Pick-up and drop-off times:** Does this fit around our working day?
- **Late runs after clubs and sport:** Can my child stay for the things that drew us here?
- **How to book a seat:** How much hassle will this be, every week?

If your admissions page can't answer those questions, the family answers them for you. Usually with someone else's school.

With Vectare. Families find their nearest stop on your route map, see the times, and book a seat themselves. They get their answers while they're still deciding, without waiting for someone in the office to reply.

And it doesn't wait on an IT project. There's no hardware to install, just a phone on the bus, so your route map can be working for admissions in weeks, not terms.



The Chicken-and-Egg Problem, and How to Break It

Fund the route before the families come, or wait and lose them?

Every new route runs into the same problem. A route needs enough families to justify it. Families need the route before they'll apply.

Most schools pick one of two paths:

Wait for demand. But families in areas you don't serve rarely show up as demand. They never apply.

Take a leap of faith. Launch the route and hope. Sometimes it fills. Sometimes it runs half-empty for a year.

The Way Out — Find the Demand Before You Commit

Most of it already exists, scattered across your school:

- **Enquiries and applications** show where interested families live.
- **A transport question at enquiry or application** shows who would use a route.
- **Families outside your routes** will tell you, if you ask. At Sutton Valence School, the Bursar invites families in areas the routes don't yet serve to get in touch, and uses those requests to gauge demand.

> *"Do you invest in a new route before the families come, or wait for the families before you invest? With admissions data behind it, every one becomes an informed decision."*
>
> *Alex Targett*
> Global Director, Growth, Vectare

With Vectare. Ridership and capacity reports show which routes run full and which have room, so you know whether a new area needs a new route or one more stop. And if families can register transport interest when they apply, demand from your new intake arrives before the route exists. Chapter 6 shows how.

It won't guarantee a route fills. It turns a gamble into a decision you can put in front of your bursar.

Where Your Applicants Live, and Where Your Buses Go

The clearest way to see that demand is to put two things on one map: where your families live, and where your buses go.

Plot your enquiries, applicants and enrolled families by postcode or address. Then lay your current routes and stops over the top.



Indicative map of a catchment area.

What the Map Shows You

Gaps

Clusters of applicants where no route reaches.

Clusters

Enough families in one area to justify a new stop, or a new route.

Drift

Routes that serve areas families no longer come from.

A map turns "we think there's demand out there" into "here's where it is".

Catchments shift from year to year. Run the map again each admissions cycle, so routes follow your families rather than last year's.

The Families You Keep

Winning a family is half the job. Keeping them is the other half.

Admissions teams count enquiries, applications and offers. Re-enrolment counts just as much. Every family who stays is a place you don't have to fill again, and fee income you keep.

Transport plays a part in that every day: the bus that turns up on time, the parent who can see where it is, the child who has made friends on the ride. Call it belonging at the bus stop.



The journey to school is part of how families feel about it.

What Families Notice

Reliable The bus arrives when it should, and the register knows who's on it.

Visible Parents see where the bus is and get a message when their child boards. That's peace of mind beyond the school gate.

Flexible Parents change a stop or book an extra trip from their phone, so a one-off request doesn't get a no.

None of this keeps a family on its own. But a journey that works removes a reason to leave, and a journey that keeps going wrong adds one.

How Vectare Runs the Day-to-Day

Read The Spend Less Time Managing Your School Buses

When Admissions and Transport Share Data

Admissions knows where next year's families live. Transport plans next year's routes. In most schools, those two conversations happen in different rooms.

Two Teams, One Set of Data

1. **The family applies.** They register their interest in transport as part of the application.
2. **Both teams see it.** Admissions and transport work from the same data, not separate spreadsheets.
3. **Routes follow the intake.** Transport decisions are made with next year's families in view.

With OpenApply and Vectare, families register transport interest in the application, and admissions and transport teams work from the same data.

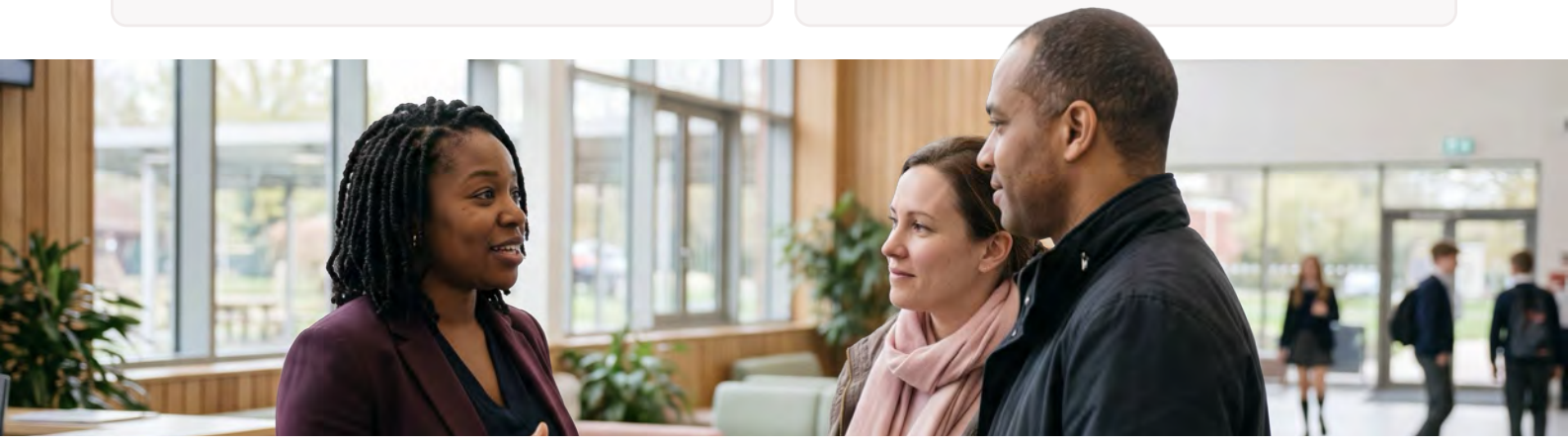
Not on OpenApply?

The principle still holds. Ask about transport at enquiry or application, and make sure the answer reaches whoever plans the routes.

Does an Operator Run Your Buses

If an operator runs your buses, the same applies. Families still ask the school, not the operator, so the school needs the data.

Here's why outsourcing the buses doesn't outsource the admin.



Schools Choose Vectare

Schools choose whether to stay with us every year. Every year, they do.

**Based on 300+ school clients between November 2024 and November 2026*

- **More than 300 schools,** and over a decade in the market
- **12 million passenger movements** per year
- Integrates with **ManageBac+, OpenApply, SchoolsBuddy** and **iSAMS**, so there's one source of truth and no double entry

"It runs in the background with minimal involvement from my staff."

Simon Fowle
Bursar, Sutton Valence School

Read the Sutton Valence Story →

Some of our 300+ school clients



Transport That Works, Worldwide

Vectare runs school transport for schools in the UK, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, with live schools in China.

Vectare is built for international and independent schools everywhere, adapting to your model, your region and your language.

Where Do Your Families Come From?

Talk to our team about where your school recruits from, where your routes go, and the gap between the two. It's a conversation, not a demo.

Book a Conversation →

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- OpenApply
- ManageBac+
- Atlas
- SchoolsBuddy
- Vectare
- EduIntelligence

We Exist to Make Education Better

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