



CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

What Parents & Carers need to know regarding Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) home to school/college transport



Passenger
Transport
Group



Shropshire
Council



INTRODUCTION

The Specialist Travel Team is responsible for the management and commissioning of the transport provision for all eligible children/young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

This code of good practice provides guidelines for parents/carers and children/young people to ensure Council contracted buses and taxis are as safe and effective as possible.



HEALTH & SAFETY

It is parental responsibility to ensure that the passenger is ready in good time and looked after appropriately until transport arrives and to ensure an appropriate adult is ready to meet the student on their return drop off.

Drivers and Passenger Assistants will not leave passengers unattended.

If parents/carers are going to be late they must contact the Specialist Travel Team so that the driver can be informed.

Please be aware that our Transport Officers may also travel on Shropshire Council contracted transport to observe the transport arrangements and ensure that these are safe and appropriate for the individual passenger's needs.



TIMINGS

Passengers should be ready (including wearing coats and shoes, with bags ready) when the vehicle arrives to collect them.

The driver will only wait 5 minutes past the allocated pick up time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is to ensure that passengers arrive on time to start their school day, only the operator can advise what your allocated pick up time will be from your home.

Drivers do not alert passengers of their arrival, passengers need to be ready and looking out for their transport provision, suitably accompanied.

Occasionally buses and taxis can be late or may not turn up. Parents need to have appropriate arrangements in place to deal with such events. It is good practice for children to have details of an emergency contact with them at all times.



TWO JOURNEYS A DAY

Travel assistance will only be provided at the start and end of the regular school day, between the registered home address and school.

Parents will be required to make alternative travel arrangements for attendance at after school clubs, child care or detentions.



**Passenger Transport Group
Shropshire Council**

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WEATHER, EMERGENCIES & OTHER ISSUES

In severe weather or emergencies, school transport may be disrupted or not operate and schools may close. Parents should keep in touch with the school and their transport operator for the latest information. Parents who take their children to school in bad weather will be expected to return them home at the end of the day.

Parents need to ensure that their school and in some cases, the transport operator, have their current emergency contact telephone numbers and parents should be aware of these situations as they develop.

Breakdowns and delays can occasionally disrupt the transport service, and whilst we will endeavour to provide replacement services there may be occasions where buses and taxis do not operate. Parents need to have arrangements in place to deal with such events.

If a passenger is taken sick in the middle of the school day, it will be parents responsibility to organise collection of their child.

On rare occasions there may be an issue with the passenger refusing to get on the vehicle or displaying unsafe behaviour which means it is not possible for them to travel at that time. We ask operators to wait a short period to see if the situation improves, but they may have to leave without the passenger onboard. In that event, parents would be responsible for collecting their child.



ENSURING TRANSPORT IS SAFE

Safety is of paramount importance and parents must ensure they encourage safe behaviour whilst on school transport.

We always take into account children's individual special needs and certain behaviours that they display as part of those needs.

On rare occasions transport staff may deem it a risk to transport a passenger for the safety of the child concerned, other passengers or themselves and may be unable to transport that passenger. The responsibility for providing transport will fall to the parent/carer. We will work closely with parents to try and seek an alternative provision, normally in the form of a 'Personal Transport Budget'.



CHANGES TO TRANSPORT

Please note that whilst we aim to provide consistency for passengers, transport arrangements may be subject to change at any time due to re-tendering, review and changes to individual passengers' needs.

Drivers and Passenger Assistants may change with little or no notice for many reasons including sickness, leave, personal reasons or service delivery.

We appreciate that change can often be difficult for passengers with Special Educational Needs, and we aim to work with parents and schools to make any transitions as smooth as possible and minimise any disruption.

QUICK FACTS

Did you know that the specialist travel team currently transport around **920+** passengers with special educational needs and disabilities every day to school/college utilising around **690** separate transport arrangements!





CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Challenging behaviour on transport is a difficult subject to manage as children and young people who may be seen as having behavioural difficulties could display these behaviours as part of their specialist educational needs. To navigate this and ensure the safety of passengers and transport staff we regularly review the arrangements put in place to make sure everyone is safe and able to adequately manage the situation.

Due to this it may be required to offer alternative forms of transport assistance in the form of Personal Travel Budgets or a new transport arrangement with alternative transport staff, if available. It is not standard procedure for students to be transported on their own, without their peers, attending the same school and we will try everything we can to ensure they are transported together safely and comfortably. We may seek guidance from the class teacher on how best to manage the behaviour and any de-escalation techniques they can suggest. All communication would be treated strictly confidential.

We ask that parents work with us to manage this situation sensitively, respectfully and safely so that all parties can achieve what is best for the passenger(s) and transport staff involved.



FOOD & DRINK ON TRANSPORT

Due to choking risks and allergies of certain passengers, there is a strict policy of no food or drink to be consumed on any vehicle provided by Shropshire Council. This is to ensure the safety of all our passengers accessing our service.



PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents and Carers are responsible for the safety of their child or young person until they safely boarded the vehicle. Once the vehicle arrives back home after the school day parents will need to be available to receive their child from the vehicle. We will not release a child to an empty home or to an unidentified person not familiar to transport staff or approved by the parent.

If a child is not appropriately received by a parent we will contact the parent/carer to ensure they are on their way, the local authority should not incur additional costs from transport providers for late or unavailable parents and as such your transport provision will be reviewed if this regularly occurs. Please make contact with our department if you believe you are likely to be late or delayed receiving your child. In extreme cases we will have no choice but to involve the police until parents/carers can be located.



NEW OR REVIEWED TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

It has become increasingly difficult to secure new arrangements with suitable transport operators due to a reduction in available transport operators in the area and a lack of drivers and passenger assistant availability during busy school times.

We currently have a framework of approved operators and drivers and use the allocated time to determine the suitability of operators matched to a passenger(s).

This work can take upwards of 10 days to facilitate and we ask that parents are patient with us whilst we finalise arrangements for their children. If you require updates, please make contact with our team who will be happy to provide you with the information.



DRIVERS & PASSENGER ASSISTANTS



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Our drivers will have all of the necessary licences to drive the vehicle under contract.

Our transport staff will be trustworthy, suitably experienced and responsible individuals who have an understanding of the individual needs of the passengers. All drivers and passenger assistants will have received all appropriate background checks and deemed suitable to provide transport on Shropshire Council contracts.

Transport staff should carry a Shropshire Council identification badge at all times, which should be presented upon request by Parents/Carers/ School staff.

Please be aware that Passenger Assistants are not immediately provided for each passenger. The decision on whether one is required for a passenger will be made by the Specialist Travel Team based on the information provided. They are usually provided due to a medical need such as the administration of Rescue Medication (Buccal Midazolam) in the event of a prolonged seizure or due to the amount of passengers on board at one time.



TAXIS & MINIBUSES

Taxis and minibuses are organised on a shared basis and as such majority of our passengers will share the transport with other students accessing the same educational facility.



CCTV

On some vehicles CCTV is in operation, this is for the safety and security of passengers and transport staff.



PERSONAL TRAVEL BUDGETS

Personal Travel Budgets (PTB) are provided only for Statutory aged students (5 to 16 years old) attending an educational facility full-time.

A PTB is a sum of money allocated to parents/carers to enable them to make their own arrangements, one that suits their families needs.

Payment is calculated on an individual basis, taking into consideration the child's needs as well as the current cost to the local authority for transporting your child to school. Once agreed, 11 monthly instalments over an academic year will be paid into a nominated bank account at the beginning of the month.



KEEP US INFORMED

Please inform the Specialist Travel Office Team if transport is not required (due to illness/holidays/ medical appointments).

Please provide as much notice as possible to avoid unnecessary charges (an operator is unable to charge if provided with over 24 hours' notice).

if you have made alternative arrangements for your child to travel to school but a return journey is required by the transport operator then you will need to let us know as soon as possible.