



STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATION NEEDS &
DISABILITIES – STATUTORY AGE

TRANSPORT APPLICATION GUIDANCE NOTES

Please read ALL of these notes
BEFORE completing an application form.



Passenger
Transport
Group



Shropshire
Council

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the travel assistance available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) living within the boundaries of Shropshire to access education.

The aim is to ensure that all children and young people lead lives that are independent and as free from restriction as possible.

The provision of travel assistance by the Council will be based on individual needs and circumstances and have regard to the efficient use of resources.

Wherever possible, in the provision of travel assistance, the Council will consider travel options that reduce the number and length of vehicle journeys.

This document explains:

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR TRAVEL ASSISTANCE FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

WHAT KIND OF TRAVEL ASSISTANCE MAY BE PROVIDED

HOW APPLICATIONS FOR TRAVEL ASSISTANCE ARE MADE AND ASSESSED; AND HOW PARENTS/CARERS CAN APPEAL AGAINST DECISIONS MADE BY THE COUNCIL

IMPORTANT:

A pupil's entitlement to transport can only be given by the Authority following completion and submission of an application form by the applicant and not by any telephone or verbal communication.

Transport is not provided for after school activities.





ELIGIBILITY

Suitable Travel Assistance based upon a child or young person's specific needs will be provided for pupils who, because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility difficulties, cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest qualifying school.

For pupils aged 5-16 with special education needs and disabilities and/or an education, health and care plan (EHCP) to qualify for travel assistance, the following must apply:



Ordinarily residing in the Shropshire Council authoritative area and of compulsory school age.



Travel assistance is only offered from the registered home address.



Registered at their nearest suitable school.



Can't reasonably be expected to walk to school because of associated health and safety issues relating to their individual special educational needs or disability/.

In considering whether a child or young person can reasonably be expected to walk to school, the Council will consider their specific needs and determine whether they can walk to school.

Wherever possible, the Council expects parents/carers of children and young people to make arrangements for their child to attend school in the same way as for parents/carers of children or young people without SEN or disabilities, as this is an important factor in developing independence, social and life skills.

Travel assistance will not be provided for the following;

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 01
Children or young people taken ill during the day. | 02
Any type of appointments including medical or any other specialists. | 03
Children or young people who have been excluded during the school day. |
| 04
Breakfast or after school clubs and any form of childcare. | 05
Journeys from/to alternative addresses. | 06
Journeys between different campuses of the same school or college. |
| 07
Individual pupil timetables | 08
Any off site Provision | 09
Bespoke transport for examinations |
| 10
Inductions, transitions or 'taster days'. | 11
School trips if departure and return times sit outside the normal school drop off and collection time. | |



TYPES OF ASSISTANCE THAT MAY BE OFFERED

Once a child or young person's eligibility for travel assistance has been agreed, the Council will offer three forms of assistance:



Personal Travel Budget (PTB)

Independent Travel Training (ITT)



Assistance in the form of Council contracted vehicle

This decision will be based on the most suitable type of Travel Assistance to meet the identified needs of the individual child or young person and will take account of the Council's duties to make the best use of its resources.

It should be noted that the type of travel assistance offered will be reviewed at least annually and may change as the needs of the child or young person change, whilst continuing to ensure the most suitable Travel Assistance is provided to meet individual needs and the best use of the Council's resources.

Travel assistance will usually only be provided for the beginning and end of the school day.

Any other journeys required will be the responsibility of parents/carers including attendance at annual reviews, additional home visits at weekends or any other time.

The Council will always consider forms of travel assistance that help to develop independent travel skills to enable children and young people to lead independent lives as they grow older.



PERSONAL TRAVEL BUDGETS (PTB)

Once it is agreed that a child or young person is eligible for travel assistance, it may be possible for the Council to provide parents/carers with an amount of money to enable them to provide personalised travel arrangements that best and most flexibly meets the needs of their child and family. The sum provided will be based on the current contractor and associated seat cost, on a route that is able to meet the needs of the pupil.

It will not exceed the cost of direct provision of transport by the Council. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that travel arrangements made by them are safe and accessible and that school attendance is maintained. A PTB can be refused or withdrawn if these conditions are not met.

This option may be of interest if:

- The parent/carer wants to take their child to school but needs support to make it financially viable.
- The child or young person has very complex needs and the parent/carer wants to make their own travel arrangements and/or the Council may be unable to meet the complex needs of the child.
- The parent/carer wants to combine the council's contribution with their own personal finances to provide the child or young person with bespoke travel assistance to meet their needs and fit in with family circumstances.

If a parent/carer is offered this form of travel assistance, it is their responsibility to ensure travel arrangements for the child or young person to:

- ⇒ **enable them to travel safely**
- ⇒ **enable them to attend school regularly and on time; and**
- ⇒ **enable them to be effectively educated once they arrive at school**



(ITT) INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

Once it is agreed that a child or young person is eligible the Council will first consider the suitability of Independent Travel Training as their travel assistance offer. The training will support a child or young person to be taught the necessary skills that will allow them to effectively deal with and resolve a range of scenarios that they might encounter when travelling on public transport.

- ◆ Timetables (including time management)
- ◆ Road Safety including walking and cycling
- ◆ Accessibility (access to transport, exits and purchasing tickets)
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Personal Safety (including what-if scenarios)
- ◆ Travel Preparation

If the transport team, SEN education team or education setting identify through a transport application, the statutory assessment process or an annual review that a child or young person may have the potential to be supported to travel independently through a travel training programme, then it will be arranged for a travel training provider to conduct an assessment in the first instance to decide if training is a suitable option for the individual.

If it is decided as a suitable option, then arrangements will be made to begin training, at the earliest opportunity. A trainer from our travel training provider, will initially contact the parent/carer to arrange an assessment and discuss the offer. This assessment process is undertaken by a qualified Travel Trainer and involves contributions from the young person and their parents, school staff and other professionals. It is expected that where independent travel training is offered as a travel solution, a child or young person will take this up.

enable

 Shropshire Council



WHO WILL TEACH THESE SKILLS?

Shropshire Council's Specialist Travel Team is working closely with Enable a specialist organisation which supports people with SEND, disabilities and other needs to integrate into the local community whether for school, college, work or independence. We have come together to provide travel training for students and young people.

Travel Training is facilitated by Enables' Independent Travel Trainers who will work closely with school/college staff, parents, carers and the trainees.

All travel trainers have clearance by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) - enhanced check and all are trained in Systematic Instruction and Safeguarding.





APPLICATION PROCESS

Parents must apply for travel assistance by completing an application form. This will be assessed to see if the pupil qualifies for free school transport and parents will be informed of the outcome.

There is no entitlement to travel expenses or reimbursements for transport arrangements made by parents before they apply to the Council for travel assistance.

If your circumstances change such as change of address or change of school placement then a new application form will need to be completed.



TRAVEL ASSISTANCE REVIEWS

All children and young people's eligibility for travel assistance will be reviewed regularly.

The review will also determine if the type of assistance remains appropriate and when independent travel training should commence.

Where travel assistance has been granted on a time-limited basis further information will be sought prior to the end of the agreed assistance period to enable a timely review to take place.

Travel assistance will also be reviewed when there is a significant change in circumstances, such as a change in home address, school or a change in the child's or young person's needs.

Transport contracts will also be routinely tendered to ensure we are compliant with procurement rules. We will aim to give families a lead in time (unless tendered for an unforeseen circumstance/emergency reason) and support in managing any change where possible.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the Council immediately of any changes that may affect the provision of travel assistance. Any changes will mean that there may be a period of time that no provision for travel assistance is in place and parents need to have appropriate contingency arrangements in place in order to get their child to school.



APPEALS PROCESS

If an application for travel assistance is not approved by the Council, or the parent/carer disagrees with the type of assistance being offered, parent/carers have a right of appeal. The appeal should be made in writing within 20 working days of the decision letter being received by the parents/carers.

Appeals are administered in two stages.

⇒ Stage one – review by a senior officer

A senior officer from the Specialist Travel Team will review the original decision, including any information provided by the parent/carer in their written appeal.

Within twenty working days, on receipt of the written appeal a detailed written notification of the outcome will be sent to the parent/carer. This will include information on how to escalate the case to stage 2 (if appropriate).

⇒ Stage two – review by a panel

A parent/carer has twenty working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.

Within forty working days of receipt of the parent/carer's request an independent appeal panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent/carer and any other supporting information as well as officers involved in the case and will give a detailed written notification of the outcome (5 working days after the panel has met). Parents/carers will have the opportunity to join a formal appeal panel if they wish, this will normally be done online via Microsoft Teams.

No assistance will be provided/changes to the assistance offered will be made during the appeals process.