

Transport for Pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Travel between home and school is an important part of your child's educational day. It needs to be safe, reliable and suitable to meet your child's individual needs.

Some children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities need to have special travel arrangements made for them. This may be because they have

- a learning difficulty
- a social, emotional or behavioural difficulty
- a sensory impairment
- a communication difficulty
- a physical disability

or it might be that they attend a special school, a specialist early years setting or college.

How do I apply for transport?

All requests for transport have to be made by completing an application form. These can be obtained by phoning the SEN Travel Enablement Team **01452 426770** or SENDIASS Gloucestershire **0800 158 3603**.

It is important that you complete the application form with as much information and detail as possible. This will help the SEN Travel Enablement Team to decide if you are eligible or not. It is also essential that you complete the right application form. There are two different application forms:

- one for students aged between 4 years and 16 years old with learning difficulties and / or disabilities
- one for post-16 students with learning difficulties and / or disabilities

What will happen next?

Your child's needs will be considered by the SEN Travel Enablement Team. To help them make their decision, they have to follow guidelines set out in Gloucestershire County Council's Transport Policy. A copy of this can be obtained from the SEN Travel Enablement Team on **01452 426770** or can be downloaded from www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/sentransport

If your child is eligible then transport is provided free of charge until they reach the statutory

school leaving age. For most children this will be the end of the academic year following their 16th birthday.

It is important to let the SEN Travel Enablement Team know if there are any changes in your circumstances as this may affect your entitlement to home to school transport.

Who will arrange my child's transport?

If your child is eligible for home to school transport, the SEN Travel Enablement Team will make arrangements for transporting your child.

The SEN Travel Enablement Team then ask approved local taxi and bus companies to 'tender' for the contract. There are strict rules about who is able to transport pupils from their home to school, as well as clear guidelines as to who is awarded the contract.

Sometimes it is possible for a child to be allocated a place on an 'existing route'. This means that a suitable taxi or bus is already going to your child's school or setting and has an available place for your child. Sometimes there are no available places on any of the routes, so a new route has to be established. This can often take a little longer to set up.

It is important that transport does not stop your child from being as independent as they can be (which will be different for each child) so it will be regularly reviewed as things change – this could mean a change in company, route or the type of transport used.

Wheelchair Users

If your child is a wheelchair user it is really important you provide as much information as possible about the wheelchair, as well as the difficulties that your child has. The information that you supply on the application form should include anything that you consider important or any information which may affect your child whilst they are being transported. This is in order that the most appropriate transport is provided for your child.

As a general rule, it is important that the wheelchair your child is travelling in:

- has been successfully crash-tested
- has not had any adaptations or alterations made which may make it unsafe for transporting
- is suitable for your child to travel in

Working on the information you provide as part of the application process and prior to transport starting, the wheelchair will need to be issued with a 'passport'. This shows that the chair has been approved and also provides guidance on which restraint systems must be used. In many cases a passport can be issued by providing specific information about the make and model of the wheelchair alongside clear, good quality photographs. There may be a need for a home visit if, for example, you are not able to provide photographs or if the wheelchair is a heavy powered wheelchair and needs to be weighed. If a home visit is needed, you will be contacted

by telephone and the visit will be arranged at a mutually convenient time. For advice or further information please call the SEN Travel Enablement Team on **01452 426770**.

What if my application has been refused?

If your request for transport is refused you may wish to ask the SEN Travel Enablement Team for the 'Senior Officer Review Application Form'. On this form you can provide further information or additional evidence to support your application in order that the decision can be reviewed. Your first application can only be assessed against the policy so there may be personal reasons why you need transport which you think are important and you would now like to disclose. Please note that 'additional evidence' may be copies of reports from your child's school, health professional or someone that knows your child well. It can be helpful if they can explain why they consider transport is necessary for your child. The Senior Officer Review Panel will hear the case within 20 working days upon receipt of your completed application form and all relevant supporting evidence.

If you are still unsuccessful you have the right to submit a formal appeal against this decision.

Appeals

Transport Appeals are held approximately every month and take place in the Meeting Rooms at Shire Hall, which is in Westgate Street in Gloucester.

If you would like to appeal the Senior Officer decision not to provide home to school transport you will need to contact the SEN Travel Enablement Team on **01452 426770**.

The Appeals Panel will be given your Senior Officer Review Application form along with other information and the decision they made. If you have any further evidence you want to be considered, this will have to be reviewed by Senior Officers before your Appeal can be arranged so it is helpful if you give as much information at the first stage.

Once you have spoken to the SEN Travel Enablement Team, you will receive a letter inviting you to attend an appeal hearing. The letter will tell you the date, time and the number of the meeting room.

You might like some help to prepare your appeal or for someone to come to the appeal with you. SENDIASS Gloucestershire can help you with all aspects of a transport appeal and can be contacted on **0800 158 3603**.

I am eligible for transport but I don't like the idea of a stranger taking my child to school or the council making the arrangements– what can I do?

If your child is eligible for home to school transport, it may be possible for you to claim mileage reimbursement. For further information about this, please call the SEN Travel Enablement Team on **01452 426770** or SENDIASS Gloucestershire on **0800 158 3603**.

Further information, advice and support:

If you would like any further information, advice or support please contact SENDIASS Gloucestershire. This service is independent, impartial, confidential and free.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service
(SENDIASS) Gloucestershire
Messenger House – 2nd Floor
35 St. Michael's Square
Gloucester GL1 1HX



Freephone: 0800 158 3603



Direct Line: 01452 389344/5



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