

Guidelines-

Special Education Needs Transport

Parent Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information to Parents / Carers of children with a special transport need.

Eligibility for Home to School Transport

Home to School transport assistance is provided for pupils with a special transport need **only** on the recommendation of a Designated Medical Officer as part of the statutory assessment process. This will include any special requirements ie. provision of an escort.

Collection / Drop – Off Procedure

When transport is initially set up for your child we will write to you giving you the following details:

- Type of provision ie. Authority Bus or Taxi
- If taxi:

The Taxi Company will contact you to arrange the collection / drop-off schedule. It is likely that your child will be travelling with other pupils and the Authority will set the collection / drop-off times.

- If Authority Bus:

The Driver will contact you to arrange the collection / drop-off schedule.

- Parents should ensure that:

They have given the appropriate contact details to the driver and that the parent has the drivers contact details.

The service will come to your home address/or designated pick up point, to collect your child in the morning. This also applies for the return journey from school when you will need to be available to collect your child from the vehicle.

Child Protection

All Drivers and Escorts are fully vetted by the Authority. Should you have any concerns about non-compliance please do not hesitate to contact us on the numbers listed at the end of these guidelines.

Escort Provision

If your child has been assigned an escort, he/she is there to ensure that all doors are closed properly and that seat belts and harnesses are used where applicable.

They are employed to ensure that the children travel in safety at all times and this also means that the drivers can concentrate on the driving of the vehicle and are not distracted in any way. They are not employed to take your child to his/her doorstep; this is your responsibility.

The escort will take your child to School and hand him/her over to a member of staff in the morning and collect him/her again in the evening. They will also try to make sure that your child leaves the transport at all times with their belongings.

Involvement of the Transport Section

The Transport Section is responsible for the **means** of travel allocated to your child, for example, the Operator, the pick up and drop off times etc. If you have any concerns in this area please do not hesitate to contact us on the numbers listed at the end of these guidelines.

If you have any concerns about the **type** of transport provided, for example, if you feel an escort should have been provided or if you feel a taxi is required etc, please contact the Special Education Section as this will have to be recommended by a designated Medical Officer.

What if the Transport does not arrive?

Before you follow the steps outlined below please allow for the fact that there may be heavy traffic in the area through which the driver has to travel.

1. The first step is to telephone the operator / driver to find out if the vehicle is late or has broken down etc. they will usually be able to give you an idea of how long the transport will be.
2. If you get no satisfaction from the operator / driver please telephone the Transport Section and we will try to sort out the problem as soon as possible.

What if your child is ill?

If your child is taken ill it is your responsibility to inform the operator / driver to save them making wasted journeys where possible. You must also inform them when your child is fit enough to return to school, otherwise they will not call for him/her.

Changes to your address

Any changes of address must be given in writing to the Transport Section. Five working days notice must be given to allow for the changes to be made. Escorts and Drivers will not accept changes of address. This must be done through the Transport Section and the Special Education Section in all instances.

A change of address may require new transport arrangements to be put in place; including a new timetable.

What happens if I'm not at home to receive my child?

If you are unable to be at home to collect your child from the transport due to an emergency, please ensure that you make alternative arrangements with the Transport Section as soon as possible.

Sometimes parents are not at home to collect their children and leave no alternative address or contact details. In exceptional situations we may have to report this to Social Services and / or the PSNI. Should this happen transport will be suspended until the Authority is satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place for the child to be safely dropped off at home.

For child protection reasons we never leave children with anybody unless the parents have instructed us, in writing, to do so.

How long will the transport wait?

Parents / carers are required to ensure their child is ready for collection. Should this not be the case the driver will initially wait a maximum of 3 minutes for a child to be brought to the vehicle. Transport is organised to a strict timetable and unlimited waiting time would mean that the children would be late into school. Please ensure that your child is ready on time.

Where pupils are persistently late, the Authority reserves the right to suspend transport until it is satisfied that parents / carers are able to meet the timetable.

Is my child allowed to eat or drink on the bus?

Pupils are normally not allowed to eat or drink on the bus.

Behaviour

Pupils are expected to behave in an acceptable manner whilst travelling on Authority arranged transport. If a pupil's behaviour gives persistent cause for concern (i.e. threatens the health and safety of themselves, other pupils, the driver or escort) and all attempts to modify such behaviour have been resisted, the Authority reserves the right to suspend transport arrangements if it considers that the behaviour of the pupil could jeopardise the safety of the vehicle occupants. In such circumstances parent(s) / carers may be expected to ensure attendance at school during periods of suspension.

Problems with Transport

In the first instance, if a parent encounters a problem with transport, the matter should be discussed with the Driver / Operator. If this fails to solve the problem then the matter should be discussed with the appropriate Transport Officer.

Medical Conditions

If your child has a medical condition which needs to be taken into consideration, it is your responsibility to inform the Transport Section.