



Liverpool  
City Council

# **Home to School Transport for Children with Special Educational or Other Needs**

**A guide for parents, pupils, schools, passenger  
assistants, contractors & drivers**

September 2020

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## 1. Introduction

This guide has been produced for the benefit of eligible pupils, parents/carers, schools, Passenger Assistant's (PA's), transport contractors and drivers. The guide outlines a code of conduct and expected standards from all involved in the transport service.

The criteria for eligibility to receive free home to school transport are produced as a separate document which is available on the Liverpool City Council website.

The service you will receive is efficient but occasionally there may be a vehicle breakdown, other incident, or weather conditions may affect traffic flow. Please make initial contact with the transport operator direct in these circumstances. Contact details of the operator will be included in the letter sent to you advising of transport arrangements. Repeated service issues should be reported to the SEN Transport Team.

## 2. Methods of Transport / Travel Passes

Members of the City Council's SEN Transport Team will determine the appropriate method of transport unless parents decide to take pupils to school themselves. Only the circumstances of the pupil will be taken into account and not the domestic circumstances of parents or carers or general family life.

The type of transport will be by one of the following: -

- a) A bus pass supported by independent travel training if required.
- b) A personal budget/travel allowance payable to parents/carers who wish to make their own home to school travel arrangements
- c) A minibus collecting children on a specific route to school;
- d) Other organised transport if a minibus is unavailable or unsuitable

PA's may be provided on some routes where it is deemed necessary.

Pupils and students may be able to travel independently to and from school using public transport. This is an important aspect of development and should be encouraged especially as pupils enter secondary education. Financial assistance may be available for eligible pupils in the form of a travel pass. Travel training is available to support pupils to move towards independent travel. This will be discussed as appropriate during a pupil's annual review.

To apply for travel training please contact the Independent Travel Training Team on 233 5954 or email [ITT@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:ITT@liverpool.gov.uk)

To apply for a travel pass you should contact the SEN Transport Team on 233 6511/6513 or email [SEN.Transport@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:SEN.Transport@liverpool.gov.uk)

### **3. Transport Contracts**

Tenders for contracts for taxi and minibus services are subject to competitive tender every 4 years (although there may be an option to extend some contracts). This will assist to ensure continuity and stability for a number of years, although the council has the right to review all routes to maintain an efficient and cost effective service. The expectations of the various agencies involved in delivering the service are outlined within this guide.

Routes are awarded based on competitive tendering.

The City Council will randomly monitor the quality of the service provided.

### **4. Disclosure Checks / Safeguarding**

The City Council will ensure all staff receive an Enhanced Disclosure check and hold a current Enhanced DBS certificate.

### **5. Guide for Parents and Carers**

Even if your child is eligible to receive transport you should encourage children to be independent as much as possible and encourage them to travel to school by public transport.

Parents who choose to take children to school themselves will receive fixed rate expenses in the form of a personal budget.

The City Council will arrange an efficient transport service and will attempt to ensure continuity as much as possible. However, to ensure the service remains efficient and cost effective we may undertake a review as necessary.

We transport over 2000 pupils each day on over 470 different school routes, therefore it is impossible to accommodate individual requests for specific pick up or drop off times. Once a route is created it will not be possible to change it as a result of domestic circumstances or any other reason as each change affects the other pupil's service.

The City Council has facilitated a free home to school service, vehicles cannot divert to an alternative destination without approval from a member of the SEN Transport Team and will do so only where the existing arrangements allow. It may not be possible to facilitate individual requests for specific pick up times or alternative pick up / drop off locations.

Parents/carers should familiarise themselves with the contact details of the transport contractor to enable them to contact them directly if a vehicle appears late. Calling the SEN transport office rather than the contractor may prevent more important calls being dealt with. The Transport office should only be notified if there is repeated lateness.

During term time a member of the SEN Transport Team is available to take emergency calls from 7:30 am until 5 pm. If you have any general queries call the Transport office at less busy times between 9:30am and 14:30pm.

Generally the service you receive will be reliable and punctual but considering the passenger figures quoted above there will be occasions when vehicles arrive late due to various reasons such as traffic or weather conditions.

Ensure that your child is ready on time or at the pick-up point a few minutes before expected arrival. It should be noted that drivers can only wait two to three minutes for each pupil because if waiting is repeated along the route all pupils will be late for school which cannot be permitted.

It would be helpful for the SEN Transport Team when planning the routes if parents could offer to take children to a close designated pick-up point, particularly where access to the home address is restricted or problematic.

Never allow your child to play by the road or misbehave whilst waiting for transport.

If the service has been missed due to lateness of your child the Council will NOT provide an additional service, therefore it will be your responsibility to get your child to school that day. Should your child not use the transport service for the morning journey, please contact the operator or SEN Transport Team to re-confirm the afternoon journey as this may have been cancelled.

Take your child to the vehicle rather than expect the PA or driver to collect them.

If your child travels in a wheelchair you must ensure the wheelchair is in good condition and suitable to be transported safely & securely on a minibus or taxi. If a wheelchair appears to have defective brakes or is unsuitable for transporting on a vehicle the City Council will refuse transport until a suitable wheelchair is provided. The driver or contractor may request information about the wheelchair. The driver may also provide advice about how your child should store personal items.

Never operate wheelchair lifts, this is the responsibility of the driver who will have received appropriate training.

Any medication for pupils that needs to be carried from home to school and return must be placed in a sealed container clearly marked with the pupil's name. Medication containers must be handed to the transport staff who will keep it isolated during the journey and hand it over to school staff on arrival. For the return journey any medication handed over by school staff will then be passed to the responsible adult meeting the pupil at home. Medication cannot be stored on vehicles outside of normal home to school journeys. Transport staff are not permitted to administer any medication on route.

Pupils are not allowed to consume food or drink on the vehicles.

Transport staff cannot assume responsibility to ensure any money or cheques sent with pupils are handed over to school staff. Money that needs to be sent into school should be placed in the pupil's bag in a sealed envelope clearly marked with the pupil's name.

A responsible adult must be with children when they are collected from home or accompanied to bus pick-up points. A responsible adult must also receive children at the time they are returned after school. Transport staff cannot wait for an adult to arrive as this not only makes other children late home but it places an inappropriate level of responsibility on PA's or drivers. In the event that an adult is unavailable to receive children, the City Council's "Protocol in the Absence of a Responsible Adult" will be activated.

In the event that a responsible person is not available to receive the child, the parents or carers will be advised of their responsibilities to ensure someone is available in future. If this recurs the transport service will be withdrawn until the Transport section are satisfied that proper arrangements have been made by parents/carers to ensure PA's and drivers are not left to care for a child in their absence.

Ensure your child understands that misbehaviour or vandalism while travelling on a minibus or taxi will not be tolerated. We also have a duty of care to PA's and drivers, therefore any aggression or violence towards them may result in the transport service being withdrawn.

Ensure your child understands the importance of wearing seatbelts.

Ensure your child does not leave personal belongings on a vehicle. If this occurs call the transport contractor rather than the Transport Office.

If your child will not be attending school for whatever reason, please give the SEN Transport Team and the PA or driver as much notice as possible, particularly if you have advanced notice of a medical appointment or similar.

Always notify the SEN Transport Team of any change of address or contact numbers as soon as possible.

You may find it helpful to complete the pupil information sheet which will be sent to you with the initial notification of transport arrangements. This sheet provides transport staff with any information you may feel is valuable about your child's needs whilst travelling or in an emergency. Please ensure that you notify the Transport office of any future alterations to the information you provide.

## **6. Guide for Pupils & Passengers**

Ensure you are ready at least 10 minutes before transport is due or arrive at the minibus pick up point several minutes before it is due.

If a pick up or drop off from/to a different address is required the SEN Transport Team must be informed. Do not ask the driver or PA yourself as they will refuse.

Never try to get on or off the vehicle when it is still moving.

Never misbehave or play at the pick up point or in a vehicle. Ignore other children's misbehaviour. If you misbehave your transport service may be suspended.

Do not swear, physically or verbally abuse the driver, PA or other passengers. Such action will not be tolerated and may result in your transport service being withdrawn. Respect the driver, PA and all other passengers.

Respect the vehicle you travel in.

Remain seated and always wear a seatbelt in a minibus or taxi.

Do not leave your personal belongings in a vehicle.

Do not eat or drink in a vehicle and never leave litter in a vehicle.

Smoking is not permitted by law in a taxi or minibus.

Do not ask the driver to stop during the journey to make purchases or for other errands.

If the vehicle breaks down, do not get off until the Passenger Assistant or driver advise you where to stand.

## **7. Guide for Head Teachers & School Staff**

Additional guidelines of the eligibility criteria have been produced which clarify which types of journeys the council is obliged to arrange and finance.

We appreciate your co-operation in allowing and facilitating contractors' vehicles to drop off and collect pupils at your school premises. Transport staff and operators must adhere to any procedures determined at each school for the alighting and boarding of pupils from vehicles. It would be useful if each school produced a premises risk assessment or method statement for contractors to adhere to.

Transport must be planned as early as possible ahead of each academic year therefore your co-operation is important to enable routes to be planned. Please advise the transport section of all new pupils or pupils who are leaving as soon as possible.

Please give the transport office advanced notice of your INSET days.

You may be contacted by parents or transport staff regarding eligibility or suitability of transport. Your advice is appreciated.

Advice sought by the transport section may include risk assessments of particular pupils or other information that may help to determine the most appropriate transport arrangements.

Please note the contractor's name and contact details for each pupil in case you need to contact them due to personal items being left on a vehicle, pupil or vehicle lateness, etc.

A pupil's transport needs may change during the course of a year so your advice on how to undertake a review would be welcome.

Please encourage pupils to understand basic rules whilst using the transport service:-

- pupils must be well behaved and respect instructions from PA's & drivers;
- ensure pupils don't leave personal items on the minibus or in the taxi;
- ensure they wear seatbelts;
- pupils should understand the consequences of misbehaviour or vandalism:

Often schools can play a key role in arbitrating between the transport section and pupils when there has been a problem with the transport service or with PA's.

Please ensure vehicles do not leave school without a particular pupil and do not allow any pupils to travel in taxis or minibuses other than those approved by the transport section.

Transport staff cannot assume responsibility to ensure any money or cheques sent with pupils are handed over to school staff. Parents have been advised that any money that needs to be sent into school should be placed in the pupil's bag in a sealed envelope clearly marked with the pupil's name.

Parents have been advised that any medication for pupils that needs to be carried from home to school and return must be placed in a sealed container clearly marked with the pupil's name. Medication containers must be handed to the transport staff who will keep it isolated during the journey and hand it over to school staff on arrival. For the return journey any medication handed over by school staff will then be passed to the responsible adult meeting the pupil at home. Medication cannot be stored on vehicles outside of normal home to school journeys. Transport staff are not permitted to administer any medication on route unless they have received specific training to do so.

It is helpful if your staff can work as PA's if their contractual school hours permit. This is of particular benefit to the pupils as they are familiar with school staff and for the council as it can often be difficult to recruit suitable part time staff.

If you have any concerns regarding the standards of performance or reliability of any contractor or their vehicles, please contact the SEN transport Team.

Travel training is available for eligible pupils to encourage independence. This will be discussed at the pupil's annual review.

## **8. Guide for Passenger Assistants**

PA's must read and adhere to the procedural and health & safety briefing that will be issued by the SEN Transport Team separately.



Understand that the children you are responsible for have a special educational need or disability and require close supervision at all times.

Take advice from parents, carers, teachers or head teachers regarding the needs and ways to make the pupils feel comfortable whilst travelling.

Ensure you welcome pupils on to the vehicle.

Maintain a courteous and professionally detached relationship with the parents or carers, children and driver. Never get into disagreements with parents or carers. Any issues must be channelled through the SEN Transport Team.

You must communicate professionally with parents, drivers and schools.

You must respect the confidentiality of pupils, parents, drivers and school workers. Never get involved in gossip.

Observe the City Council's guidelines on the use of social media. It is not acceptable to disclose information regarding your role as a passenger assistant on any form of social media. A full copy of the guidelines is available from the SEN Transport Team.

Always wear your identity badge. Contact your employer if you do not have one or require a replacement. A uniform is not mandatory for passenger assistants, however you are required to dress in an appropriate manner. Clothing must be clean and tidy. Do not wear any clothing with statements that may cause offence. Flat enclosed shoes are the most appropriate footwear.

Always be on the vehicle before the first pupil and leave the vehicle after the last pupil.

Encourage parents to bring pupils to the vehicle rather than you going to collect them. Your role is to supervise the pupils on the vehicle and some with challenging behaviour may attempt to leave the vehicle.

There should never be a need for you to physically lift or carry a pupil.

Ensure children embark and disembark safely from the vehicle. Transport staff must adhere to any procedures determined at each school for the alighting and boarding of pupils from vehicles.

Unless you arrive at a pick up point much earlier than usual, encourage the driver to only wait for 2-3 minutes for each pupil to collect them from home otherwise all pupils may be late for school. Always ensure all pupils who have attended school are collected from school each evening. Check before leaving the school for any pupil who may not have travelled in with you that morning but who may have been brought to school later.

Always check the vehicle at the end of each journey morning and afternoon in case any pupils have fallen asleep or are hiding.

Ensure children do not leave personal items on the vehicle.

You must never operate wheelchair lifts unless you have received formal training and have been given permission to operate it. Health & safety regulations forbid you from using lifts without such training therefore you must leave it to the driver.

Ideally you should sit in a position on the vehicle where you can observe and supervise all pupils.

Do not use your mobile phone for social media activity or engage in telephone conversations while you are on duty, your role is to supervise the pupils closely at all times.

Ensure children do not misbehave on the vehicle or distract the driver. Never shout at, hit or drag a child. If you are unsure how to handle a situation take advice from the SEN Transport Team or the school. Never take punitive action yourself.

Report incidents to the SEN Transport Team.

Ensure no unauthorised passengers use the vehicle.

Ensure children & yourself wear seatbelts.

Ensure high back booster seats are available on minibuses for children under 135cm tall.

Ensure the driver uses wheelchair tie downs and occupant restraint systems for wheelchair users. Do not use these systems yourself unless you have received training to install them. Do not allow wheelchair users to travel facing sideways.

On the return journey, in the event that you arrive at an address and a responsible person is not available, contact the SEN transport Team immediately for them to establish the whereabouts of the parent or guardian. Meanwhile you can request the driver to finish the route if there are other children on board. On return, if it remains that a responsible adult is not available to receive the child, the "Protocol in the Absence of a Responsible Adult" will be activated.

Subsequent to this the parents or guardians will be asked to satisfy the SEN transport Team that this will not recur. PA's must not take action themselves.

If the vehicle breaks, down stay with the passengers on the vehicle. If they need to get off the vehicle guide them to a safe place at the roadside. Inform the Transport Team immediately.

Always report instances of inappropriate behaviour or language towards transport staff or other children to the school and SEN Transport Team. You will be asked to complete an appropriate form.

Never take a decision yourself to withdraw the transport service from a pupil who has misbehaved. If there are issues with pupils the SEN Transport Team must resolve them.

Never accept gifts, however use your discretion when offered a Christmas or thank you gift.

Never offer pupils gifts or sweets, etc. Do not permit pupils to consume food or drink on the vehicle.

Smoking is not permitted by law in a minibus or taxi. PA's and drivers must not smoke immediately before collection of children or while transporting passengers.

Do not attempt to administer first aid to anyone unless you have received training.

If pupils are carrying medication to school & return, you must ensure it is isolated from other pupils. Parents/carers have been advised that all medication must be in a sealed container clearly marked with the pupil's name.

You should not assume responsibility to ensure any money or cheques sent with pupils are handed over to school staff. Parents have been advised that any money that needs to be sent into school should be placed in the pupil's bag in a sealed envelope clearly marked with the pupil's name.

All accidents and incidents must be reported to the SEN Transport Team. It may be necessary to attend Newton Road depot to complete an appropriate form.

If you have any concerns about the transport contractor, driver or vehicle condition you must report them to the SEN Transport Team.

Understand that you can be a key source of information between the school, parents and the SEN Transport Team but never get involved in gossip.

Be prepared to receive any mandatory training as and when required..

## **9. Guide for Transport Contractors**

All contractors must be familiar with and adhere to the terms of the contract specification. Contractors that fail to provide a high quality service in terms of vehicle condition, service reliability, driving standards or another breach of contract may have routes removed from them or the contract terminated.

To assist the SEN Transport team and to reduce the amount of telephone activity Contractors must receive calls from parents/carers or schools regarding service issues. Any changes to routes including cancellations must be authorised by the SEN Transport Team.

Ensure that ALL your staff have read and are familiar with the guidelines throughout this document.

Operate the service to ensure pupils are not late for school.

Ensure your drivers hold appropriate licences and have the correct attitude to undertake a sensitive role that is expected in providing this service.

Ensure drivers and PA's hold a current Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Certificate for the children & Adult workforce.

Ensure your vehicles and drivers adhere to all road traffic and health & safety legislation. Ensure all vehicles are insured.

Familiarise yourself with all codes of practice such as DfT Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness, H&SE Driving Whilst at Work and publications or advice from the Community Transport Association. In particular you should research and remain familiar with all aspects of the safety of wheelchair passengers in minibuses and taxis.

You must co-operate in a health & safety self monitoring exercise. This audit requires all contractors to implement and review their own health & safety systems from a document produced by the SEN Transport Team.

Ensure your drivers are trained to operate wheelchair lifts and use of occupant restraint systems. It is not the responsibility of the passenger assistant (PA) to use such equipment unless they have had adequate training. Ensure all, including temporary PA staff, employed or sourced by you, are aware that use of tail lift and securing wheelchairs is the responsibility of the driver who will have received appropriate training.

Ensure your vehicles carry sufficient & suitable wheelchair tie down & occupant restraint straps, and that all straps are regularly examined for condition and suitability.

Ensure you have contingency plans for vehicle breakdowns or other emergencies.

Develop good practice so in the event of a breakdown, your driver or your admin team calls ahead to parents of children still on the bus to advise that they may late.

Keep vehicles in a clean and well maintained condition & display the School Bus sign.

Try to assign the same driver (and PA if you provide one) to a route to create continuity.

Smoking is not permitted by law in a minibus or taxi. Drivers and PA's must not smoke immediately before collection or while transporting passengers.

Do not allow drivers to deviate from the planned route or carry unauthorised passengers.

Drivers should not enter school buildings unless they are given permission to do so. Transport staff and operators must adhere to any procedures determined at each school for the alighting and boarding of pupils from vehicles.

Inform the SEN Transport Team if you receive any complaints about the service you provide, together with your proposed action to alleviate the complaint.

## **10. Guide for Drivers**

Understand that the children you are transporting have a special educational need or disability, therefore your conduct and attitude should be respectful and professional.

Maintain a courteous and professionally detached relationship with the parents or carers and children. Observe your employer's policy on the use of social media. Never get in to disagreements with parents or carers. Any issues must be channelled through the Transport team.

Ensure you welcome pupils on to the vehicle.

Always carry an appropriate form of identification as you may be asked to produce this when collecting children.

You must be prepared to assist pupils with mobility impairments to enter & exit the vehicle if necessary.

Children must never be left unattended on vehicles.

Never accept gifts, however use your discretion when offered a Christmas or thank you gift.

Never offer pupils gifts or sweets, etc. Never offer children food.

Refrain from using inappropriate language in front of the children even if they use inappropriate language themselves.

You must respect the confidentiality of pupils, parents, passenger assistants and school workers. Never get involved in gossip.

Report any incidents of misbehaviour to a member of the school staff or to the SEN Transport Team. Never take punitive action yourself. If a pupil's behaviour becomes unmanageable park the vehicle in a safe place and contact the transport team or your line manager. Never evict a pupil from the vehicle before the journey has been completed.

Do not agree to requests from passengers to deviate from the route for messages, errands or any other reason unless requested by the SEN Transport Team.

Wherever possible pick-up and set down pupils curbside or in a place where unnecessary risks are not involved and to avoid pupils crossing the road.

Transport staff and operators must adhere to any procedures determined at each school for the alighting and boarding of pupils from vehicles.

Only carry passengers from the scheduled route and never carry unauthorised passengers.

Always check the vehicle at the end of each journey morning and afternoon in case any pupils have fallen asleep.

Always check that pupils have not left personal belongings in your vehicle

Ensure you have all your passengers for the return journey. Just because a pupil did not travel to school with you does not mean s/he will not be travelling home in the vehicle.

Do not allow the PA to operate tails lifts & ramps or secure wheelchair passengers with occupant restraints unless you have been advised formally that they have received appropriate training.

Participate in the training provided by your employer in the use of lifts and occupant restraints, and remain familiar with current community transport issues regarding transporting vulnerable children or wheelchair passengers. Attend a MiDAS course (minibus driver awareness scheme).

If wheelchairs are not suitable to be transported in a vehicle or appear faulty, always request your supervisor to notify the councils transport team.

Ensure your vehicle is roadworthy. It is your responsibility to undertake daily checks of the vehicle and to report defects to your line manager.

Keep doors closed until the vehicle is stationary. Do not allow children to open or close doors. Never lock any of the doors while pupils are travelling on a minibus.

Ensure you have a strategy for breakdowns or other emergencies. If the vehicle breaks down, stay with the passengers on the vehicle. If they need to get off the vehicle guide them to a safe place at the roadside.

If an accident occurs, injuries or circumstances will tell you what action needs to be taken immediately. If needed, call the emergency services and in addition to the details of the accident you should also inform them that your passengers are pupils with Special Educational or other needs. If a pupil requires medical attention you should then call the parent/carer if you are able to do so. In all events ring the transport section and record the details in your log book as soon as you are able

If a passenger becomes unwell during a journey, the nature of the illness will determine what action to take. If needed, the driver should summon medical assistance and contact the pupil's parent/carer if this is possible.

It may be necessary to delay the journey for any other pupils on board. The transport section will be able to help in these instances by making alternative arrangements for

any pupils who have not yet been collected and informing the school or other parent/carers of any delay.

Ensure your vehicle is always clean and tidy.

Ensure you know how to use the fire extinguisher on board the vehicle.

Do not drive until all children are seated and have secured their seatbelts. If a child removes a seat belt you must pull over until they are secured again.

Make sure your vehicle is not loaded beyond its seating capacity. Each pupil must be assigned to an individual seat.

Follow the Highway Code and adhere to speed limits at all times.

If pupils are carrying medication to school & return, you must ensure it is isolated from other pupils. The medication should be in a sealed container, clearly marked with the pupil's name.

Do not smoke in your vehicle. Smoking is not permitted by law in a minibus or taxi. PA's and drivers must not smoke immediately before collection of children or while transporting passengers.

## **11. Contract Monitoring**

Relevant City Council staff will randomly visit schools to examine the method of transport, the condition and suitability of contractors' vehicles and check for the correct use of wheelchair occupant restraints.

Transport contractors will be notified in writing of any shortfalls in standards and will be expected to take corrective or remedial action without delay.

Contractors' must undertake self monitoring of health & safety systems which is facilitated by a document circulated by the councils transport team.

The City Council will also monitor the number of complaints received against contractors regarding punctuality and level of service.

Contractors' taxis will be subject to random monitoring by Liverpool City Council's Licensing Unit and minibuses are subject to checks by VOSA (vehicle operator service agency).

## **12. Complaints / Have Your Say**

Have Your Say (HYS) is Liverpool City Council's feedback scheme for dealing with comments, compliments and complaints.

If you have queries concerning Have Your Say, please contact a member of the Transport Team who will send a form. Alternatively forms are available from One-Stop-Shops. More information is available from [www.liverpool.gov.uk](http://www.liverpool.gov.uk)

### 13. Useful Telephone Numbers

Your child's transport operator & number.....

Your child's school.....

Your child's driver /passenger assistant.....

(NB as these are private numbers, it is an optional requirement only for the driver or passenger assistant to provide their own telephone number)

SEN Transport Team: 233 6511 or 233 6513

Email address: [SEN.Transport@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:SEN.Transport@liverpool.gov.uk)

Liverpool City Council: 233 3006 Applications for mainstream pupils  
Travel Passes

Careline (children's): 233 3029 Children's social care services

HR and Payroll Services: 233 3006 LCC employees payroll enquiries

Independent Travel Training Team 233 5954 Independent Travel Training