



Northumberland

County Council



**HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT HANDBOOK
FOR PARENTS & CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES (SEND)**

PLEASE KEEP THIS BOOKLET FOR REFERENCE

CALL THE SEND TRANSPORT TEAM ON 01670 624 839



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This booklet provides information to parents/carers of SEND children who access the home to school transport service as arranged by Northumberland County Council. Further information regarding the school transport service is provided on the council's school transport webpage. Go to northumberland.gov.uk and search for "school transport".



TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

What type of travel arrangements can I expect to be put in place for my child?

If your child is eligible for free school transport, the type of transport arrangements that may be put in place can vary from;

- The provision of a “walking” passenger transport assistant (PTA) to accompany your child on the walk to and from school
- The provision of a PTA on public transport or on a school minibus or taxi service arranged and funded by the Council. Only approved and pre-vetted licensed taxi, minibus and coach operators are used
- Payment of a travel allowance or a personal budget to you. In return, you would agree to make arrangements to transport your own child to and from school. This offer is usually only made when there is no other suitable transport available

My child is not entitled to free school transport. What are my options?

Where a child is not entitled to free home to school transport, you may be able to purchase a spare seat (if available) in return for a concessionary fare, thereby allowing them to travel to and from school on one of the Council's contracted school transport vehicles.

- Unfortunately a seat cannot always be guaranteed, and may need to be withdrawn at short notice. If a seat is available, you will be made aware at the end of September each year
- Further details are provided on the Council's school transport web page under “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs)



MY CHILD'S MEDICAL NEEDS



What about my child's medication?

Passenger assistants are only able to administer emergency medication to your child following receipt of the appropriate training from your child's paediatric care team.

If you have NOT been asked about your child's medical condition you should contact the SEND Transport Team immediately. Your consent will then be sought if we need to arrange for your child's passenger assistant to be trained to administer rescue medication to your child.

It is your responsibility to provide us with up to date information, if you do not do this we may have to withdraw your child's access to transport

What should I do if my child's medical needs change?

Please contact the SEND Transport Team as soon as any change in their medication is known. This will give us the opportunity to consider whether additional training for your child's passenger assistant is required.

Failure to do this may result in your child temporarily being removed from accessing school transport whilst appropriate training is organised.

In such circumstances, it would be the parent and carer's responsibility to transport the child between home and school.



THE DRIVER AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT ASSISTANT



**How do I know
who the driver and
passenger assistant
will be?**

Before transport arrangements commence, the transport provider will contact you to arrange a “meet and greet” for you and your child.

This is an opportunity for you to meet the team who will be responsible for transporting your child to and from school, exchange contact numbers, and key information regarding your child's needs. If you do not hear from the transport provider you should contact the SEND Transport Team.

**How can I check
that driver and
passenger assistant
are authorised to
transport children?**

All approved drivers and passenger assistants are issued with a Northumberland County Council ID badge which includes a photo, expiry date, and Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) number.

Occasionally drivers and passenger assistants may need to be changed at short notice due to sickness, staff leaving, etc. Please inform us if you notice that your child's driver and passenger assistant team are changed on a regular basis.

**What information is
provided to the driver
and passenger assistant
in relation to my child?**

We work closely with schools and with colleagues in the Council's SEND team and other professionals who work with your child.

They give us as much information as they can about the needs of your child. Most importantly, we need to get information from you so please do ensure we are kept up to date with your emergency contact details and the needs of your child.



What type of qualifications and training do the drivers and passenger assistants get?

All drivers hold a valid UK driving licence and are appropriately licensed with the Council. Both Driver and PTA are required to attend a briefing on child safeguarding and hold a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate.

Drivers and PTAs are required to attend disability awareness training organised by the Council. We believe it is desirable that drivers and passenger assistants have comprehensive knowledge of First

Aid, therefore courses are arranged on a regular basis to ensure they receive up-to-date training in both CPR and Anaphylaxis Awareness.

Further child specific training is provided to drivers and passenger assistants where such a need is identified, e.g. in the case of a child with a diagnosis of epilepsy or diabetes where the administration of rescue medication may be required (in such cases parental consent will be sought before any training is undertaken).

If a child requires wheelchair accessible transport, drivers and passenger assistants are required to attend a training course organised by the Council so they understand how to correctly secure wheelchair passengers in vehicles. Other bespoke training is arranged as and when required.



PICK UP ARRANGEMENTS

Can transport pick up and drop off my child at an address other than the home address?

Transport is only provided between the child's home and school; therefore transport can not pick up and drop off at any other address.

If my child isn't ready at the agreed pick up time will transport wait?

The taxi or minibus will only wait for 5 minutes, to prevent other children on the route from arriving late at school.

Can the driver and passenger assistant come to the house to collect my child?

It is your responsibility to take your child to the vehicle in the morning. Drivers and passenger assistants are required to remain within the vehicle. If a car seat or harness is required for the child, it is the parents' responsibility to fit the car seat in the vehicle.

How long will my child spend travelling to and from school each day?

This will vary depending on where you live and what school your child attends. The Council will make every effort to ensure the time your child spends travelling between home and school is not too long and should not, generally, exceed 2 hours in total a day.

DROP OFF ARRANGEMENTS



What happens when transport drops off my child?

Please ensure an appointed responsible adult collects your child from the vehicle on their return home. If no one appears to collect your child, after 5 minutes the driver/passenger assistant will notify the SEND Transport Team.

If the driver is unable to contact you, they will continue to operate the route and drop-off the other children before returning to the home address to try and drop your child off again.

If there is still no one available at your home address then, following consultation with the SEND Transport Team, the driver will take your child to a place of safety such as a social services office or the nearest police station.

If this happens on more than one occasion, then the offer of travel support for your child may need to be withdrawn until you can ensure a responsible adult will be available to meet your child at the drop-off point. It will then become your responsibility to transport your child to and from school during this time.



GENERAL INFORMATION



**Can my child
consume food and
drink on the journey
to and from school?**

Food and drinks should not be consumed on any school transport vehicle, except in the case of children with diabetes.

If this policy is ignored a warning letter will be sent out, and could ultimately result in your child being temporarily restricted from accessing school transport. If a child is removed from transport it would become a parents' responsibility to get their child to and from school.

**What happens if my
child is ill?**

If your child is ill, please contact the driver and PTA to advise them that collection will not be required that day. Please keep them informed of any changes so they know when to re-commence pick up.

Transport is only provided for the beginning and end of the normal school day. If your child is taken ill at school or needs to be taken home for any other reason, school transport will not be provided and it will be the responsibility of the parents to arrange collection.

**Can the transport
operate later on those
days when my child
attends after school
activities?**

School transport is only provided at times which coincides with the normal start and end of the school day so if your child is staying later (even if they are compulsory study lessons) it is your responsibility to make arrangements for them to travel home safely.



**Why wasn't I given
notice transport was
going to change?**

Where possible, the SEND Transport team try to give notice to parents and carers when a child's transport arrangements are going to change.

We recognise that any such change can affect pupils and may cause them distress in addition to inconveniencing their parents and carers. Inevitably there are occasions where the transport arrangements need to be changed at very short notice, e.g due to driver or passenger assistant illness or vehicle breakdowns, which are beyond our control.

We do however make every effort to inform parents and carers as soon as possible if this occurs.



BAD WEATHER

What happens in the event of bad weather?



- In the event of waking up to bad weather, it is up to the transport provider to make a judgement as to whether they feel it is safe to operate
- If the driver decides against operating, they should contact you directly to advise you of this as soon as possible
- If you take your own child into school, it is then your responsibility to ensure they can get home again in the event that the school transport service does not run
- If the pupils are already in attendance and the Head Teacher has taken a decision to close early, the school will contact all their transport providers directly to advise of the early finish
- The transport providers will then provide transport home for the children at the earliest opportunity. In such an event, the school will also notify both the SEND Transport Team and parents/carers that they are closing early so you can be at the drop-off point to receive your child
- Information regarding disruption to the school transport service will be posted on the 'Important Alerts & Reminders' section of the home page of the Council's website as well as its Facebook and Twitter sites

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP



To help keep transport running smoothly, there are a number of ways you can help us.

Please contact the SEND transport team:

- If your child's new transport provider does not contact you to arrange a "meet & greet" (applicable in cases where your child's transport provider changes)
- If you have any problems or concerns regarding your child's transport arrangements or the driver and passenger transport assistant
- If you change your contact details
- If you are planning to move house; A new application for transport must be submitted which you can find on the school transport webpage via the Council's website. Please submit an application with as much notice as possible as it may have a bearing on your child's eligibility for free school transport. We need at least two weeks notice of a house move so that we can make the necessary changes to your child's transport arrangements. Failure to give us notice may result in disruption to your child's transport for a period of time
- If your child is unable to attend school for any reason so that we can inform the transport provider. This is especially important if your child is the sole occupant in the taxi
- If you notice that your transport provider is regularly changing your child's driver and passenger assistant
- If your child's needs change in any way







Northumberland

County Council

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Passenger Transport Unit:

01670 624839

(office hours)

0345 6006400

(outside of office hours)

POLICE

General Issues:

101

Emergencies:

999

MULTI AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB

(MASH):

01670 536400

(this covers all
safeguarding issues
for children and adults)

YOUR SCHOOL/DAY CENTRE CONTACT:

I.C.E (IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.NORTHUMBERLAND.GOV.UK
AND SEARCH SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

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