

# Special Needs Home to School Transport



## Guidelines for Drivers and Escorts

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**These guidelines are for drivers and escorts providing home to school transport for young people needing special arrangements. It lists what is expected from you over and above any statutory requirements.**

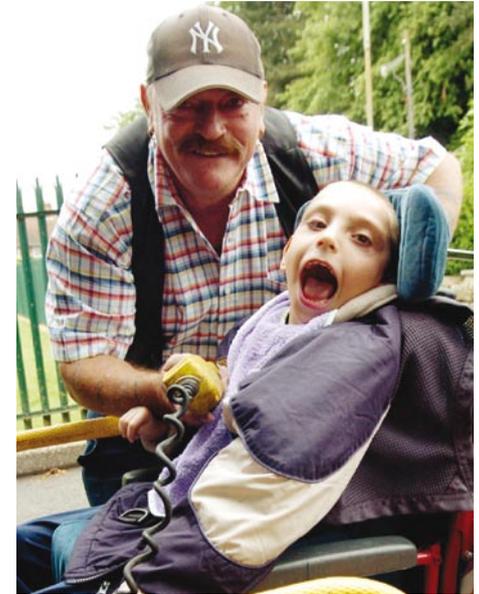
Derbyshire County Council believes whenever possible young people should be encouraged to develop independent travel habits using public transport. But the nature of placements in schools and centres means that arrangements have to be flexible. To achieve this the authority works in partnership with transport providers, parents and carers, schools and young people to provide a quality service.

The county council provides more than 300,000 taxi and minibus journeys each year for

young people who have special educational needs.

These are monitored and reviewed regularly. Most of the time things run smoothly, but when problems occur Derbyshire County Council will deal with and resolve issues as quickly as possible.

We try to avoid constant changes of operator but we have to maintain high, cost-effective standards of service and are required to tender every five years. Any contractor who regularly fails to meet the terms of its contract may find its



services terminated.

Please read these guidelines to help deliver a quality service to young people needing special school transport arrangements.

## The journey:

- only authorised passengers should be allowed to make the journey.
- passengers must only be transported between home and school or school and short-break carers. They should never be taken to any alternative address unless there has been prior notification from the council's transport office.
- where a door-to-door service is provided it is the parents' or carers' responsibility to take the passenger to and from the home to school transport vehicle. Passengers must never be left unattended.
- drivers and escorts should not lift or carry pupils only help them get on and off the vehicle. Manual handling advice is available from schools upon request. Where required, drivers and escorts should ask school staff to help pupils get in and out of vehicles.
- passengers should be seated safely and seatbelts and restraints should be properly secured before the vehicle sets off.
- drivers and escorts are not usually permitted to give medication to passengers, although it may be carried on the vehicle if it is in a sealed container or bag clearly labelled with the passenger's name. Parents or teachers may ask you to keep medicines safe during the journey and to hand it over to a responsible adult on arrival.
- prescribed protocols must be followed for individual pupils who do need medication.
- drivers and escorts must co-operate with schools over arrangements for parking, picking up and setting down within school grounds and the handing over of children to school staff.
- if a responsible adult is not at home when the passenger is due to be dropped off drivers should wait five minutes past the usual arrival time before continuing the journey. The transport office or school should then be informed. Once all other passengers have been dropped off, call back. If there is still no one there the passenger should be taken to a safe place of care such as a social services office or police station. A note should be left for parents or carers telling them where the passenger is.

## Drivers/escorts:

- are required to complete an enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure application form. Employment will depend on satisfactory clearance being received by Derbyshire County Council.
- must carry some form of identification. Private Hire and Hackney Carriage drivers should wear their driver's badge where it can easily be seen.
- Derbyshire County Council operates a no-smoking policy. This extends to not smoking in the vehicle up to 10 minutes before the start of a home to school journey or on school premises, including in car parks and waiting areas.



## Training and safety:

- drivers and escorts should be fully-trained to use any ancillary equipment fitted to vehicles, such as tail lifts, ramps, wheelchair and passenger restraints and car seats. Contractors are responsible for providing this training. Extra advice may be obtained from schools and parents/carers.
- they should also be trained to use the fire extinguisher, first aid kit and any other safety equipment.
- the comfort and safety of passengers should be the driver's main concern. A high standard of driving is essential taking into account the ages and needs of the passengers being carried.
- drivers are reminded that they must not use hand-held mobile telephones when the vehicle is moving.
- if there is an accident get the vehicle off the road if possible and if you are causing an obstruction warn other traffic using hazard warning lights. Ensure that passengers are kept under control and move uninjured people away from the vehicle to safety. On a motorway this should, if possible, be well away from the traffic, the hard shoulder and the central reservation. The employer, school and council's transport office should then be contacted.

## Passenger awareness:

- an understanding and awareness of the needs of disabled and vulnerable people is essential.
- drivers and escorts must exercise absolute discretion and confidentiality with regard to passengers and their individual circumstances.
- passengers should be treated with kindness, respect and understanding. Appropriate language should always be used.
- unnecessary physical contact should be avoided and passengers must never be struck or threatened.
- giving drinks, sweets or gifts is not allowed as this can be misconstrued or cause health problems where children have allergies or swallowing difficulties.
- some passengers can demonstrate challenging behaviour. You should use positive, firm instructions and facial expressions to communicate. Strategies for the management of behavioural issues should be discussed with a senior member of the school's staff.



## Driver and Escort Identification

Derbyshire County Council issues identification badges to all drivers and escorts providing special needs home to school transport. We believe this helps reassure young people, parents and carers and school staff that we provide a quality service using professional, appropriately vetted and trained staff who are aware of their responsibilities.

Please provide the following information so that your badge can be issued. All information will be kept in strict confidence.

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Name                                     |               |
| Home address                             |               |
|  |               |
| Postcode                                 | Date of birth |
| Name of employer                         |               |
| Contract number (Ask employer if unsure) |               |
| School                                   |               |
| Date CRB clearance received              |               |

Please attach a passport-sized photograph. This will be returned with your identity pass. Then send to: Derbyshire County Council, Special Needs Transport, Environmental Services Department, County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG.

**I have read and understand the drivers'/ escorts' guidelines and confirm that the above details are correct.**

Signed

Date



## Further information:

We hope you find these guidelines useful but if you have any queries or need more information about special needs school transport please contact

**Call Derbyshire 08 456 058 058**

(8.00am–8.00pm weekdays, 9.30am– 4.00pm Saturdays).

Or you can write to:

**Special Needs Transport**

**Environmental Services Department**

**Derbyshire County Council**

**County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG**

Email: [public.transport@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:public.transport@derbyshire.gov.uk)

Guidelines are also provided to contractors, parents and carers and schools. If you would like copies of these leaflets please contact

**Call Derbyshire 08 456 058 058.**

If you have difficulty reading these guidelines they can be made available in other formats. Please contact Call Derbyshire 08 456 058 058 for more information.

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