

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

Special Needs Home to School Transport

These guidelines are for schools and colleges involved in home to school transport arrangements for their students. It details what is required of you over and above statutory requirements and aims to encourage positive working relations between Derbyshire County Council and colleagues in schools and establishments to ensure safe and legal passenger transport services.

Transport Arrangements

The Council provides more than 100,000 taxi and minibus journeys each year for young people who have special educational needs and disabilities.

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 students to provide a cost effective and efficient service.

All the transport contracts are monitored and reviewed regularly. The majority of the time services run smoothly, however as problems occur, the Council will aim to deal with and resolve issues as soon as possible.

The Council seeks to avoid frequent changes of operators but we have to maintain cost-effective services and are therefore required to tender in accordance with procurement regulations. Operators are monitored for performance and any operator who regularly fails to meet the terms of its contract may find its services terminated.

Transport arrangements are also reviewed every year at the student's annual review meeting. For some, the provision of transport will continue throughout their school life. For others improved skills and increased independence means they don't require this assistance any more. In such cases decisions to end special transport provision will be taken in partnership with parents/carers and students.

Derbyshire County Council promotes, wherever possible, that students should be encouraged to develop independent travel using public transport. To find out more information, or to make a referral contact the travel training team on 07805 745341 or email lift-derbyshire@natstar.ac.uk

Assistance may be provided by reimbursement of a parent/carer's mileage expenses at a rate determined by the Council. The decision

whether or not to provide these payments will consider factors such as the student's well-being, safety and cost

Passenger Behaviour

- Drivers and passenger assistants are encouraged to report or discuss any concerns about behaviour with school staff. Your support can play a vital role in ensuring that behaviour on home to school transport is consistent with the expected standards in schools/colleges or establishment
- Where drivers or passenger assistants report difficulties with students, we ask that the school works with the Council to resolve the situation by reinforcing passenger responsibilities and working on alternative solutions
- In extreme cases of challenging or aggressive behaviour, vandalism or failure to comply with passenger responsibilities, transport may be suspended or withdrawn. In these circumstances co-operation from school is essential.

Safety

- It is important to ensure that pick-up and drop-off points remain safe by being kept clear at the beginning and end of the school day and not obstructed with other vehicles
- If home to school transport fails to arrive to collect students within 15 minutes of the expected time, please inform the contractor and the Council's transport unit. It may be necessary to arrange for students to wait safely until alternative arrangements have been made
- Once a student has alighted the home to school transport vehicle and has been safely delivered onto the school grounds, they become the responsibility of the school staff
- School staff may be requested to assist students on and off vehicles, particularly in circumstances where students demonstrate challenging behaviour and pose a risk to themselves or others.

Other

- Journeys are only provided at specified drop off and pick up times and from the pre-arranged school or establishment to a named destination
- It is the responsibility of parents or carers to provide transport for their dependents in the following situations, including:
 - Illness (i.e. including leaving school early)
 - medical or dental appointments
 - external examinations or assessments
 - temporary suspension, detention or permanent exclusion
- A list of training or inset days should be provided to transport operators with details of days when schools/establishment are closed.
- The Council has also updated its 'Guidelines for Parents and Carers' and this is available on the Council's website on the School Buses webpage
- If you have any concerns about taxi or minibus operators in the areas of safety, performance, or conduct, you should contact the special needs transport team as detailed below.

If you have any queries about these guidelines or need more information about special needs school transport, please contact:

Call Derbyshire 01629 533190

Or write to:

**Special Needs Transport
Economy, Transport & Communities
Derbyshire County Council
County Hall
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3AG**

Email: **specialisedtransportservices@derbyshire.gov.uk**

If you have difficulty reading these guidelines they can be made available in other formats.