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Education Transport & Awards  
Essex County Council  
County Hall, Chelmsford  
Essex, CM1 1QH

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## **SEN Home to School Transport**

### **A Guide for Parents**

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## Who is entitled?

### The Council's policy is in accordance with the law.

The County Council provides home to school transport assistance to children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who attend the nearest suitable school to their home address that meets their needs and resides:

- Two miles or more from that school if the child is under the age of 8.
- Three miles or more over the age of 8 (Year 4 onwards).
- In addition to the above, where a child's SEN or mobility difficulties mean he or she cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school even when accompanied by a parent, transport can be provided even if the distance criteria is not met.

### Low income policies

A low income family is defined as one where the household income is less than £16,190 per annum.

#### Primary Schools

For low income families, the distance threshold remains at 2 miles when the child starts Year 4.

#### Secondary Schools

Transport is provided to any one of the 3 nearest qualifying schools between 2 and 6 miles from the home.

## What if I prefer a further school?

Transport is provided to the nearest suitable school that can meet a child's needs, under the criteria on page 1.

The assessment and decision on what is the nearest suitable school that can meet a child's needs is made by the Council.

The Council's decision on the nearest suitable school that is able to meet a child's needs may not always be the one a parent feels is the best school for their child.

### Parental Preference

Parents may prefer a different school that is further away than the nearest suitable school that is able to meet the child's needs.

**However**, if parents want that further school named in the child's EHCP, they can be asked to sign a transport disclaimer to accept the full responsibility of arranging and funding transport costs.

**If this is something that you are considering, it is very important that you take this into account.**



## What type of transport is provided?

Where an entitlement to transport exists, the Council has a duty to arrange suitable transport that enables a child to access their education at the start and end of the usual school day and will look to utilise available transport networks.

### Potential modes of transport

**A seat on a shared vehicle** – with other children travelling to school.

**Public transport passes** – for children able to use public transport to get to school. Travel Training can be provided free of charge.

**A fuel allowance** – two return journeys at 45p per mile for parents to take their children to and from school.

**A personalised transport budget** – a set payment for parents to make their own arrangements.

**Free Travel Training** – where appropriate, for children to obtain greater independence and enhance their life skills, both in school and as they progress into adulthood.

**'Individual transport' i.e. one to one transport is not how transport is arranged. Where there is an available vehicle running to a school and there is space, children are added to that.** If there are no available vehicles, a new one may be provided and new children will be allocated a seat on that vehicle when they come along in the future.

## Is a passenger assistant provided?

Passenger assistants (escorts) are not automatically provided.

The consideration generally takes account of the following:

- A child's medical needs, particularly where rescue medication is required.
- Where an individual child's needs create a clear danger or health and safety risk to themselves and other passengers on the vehicle.
- Where one is required to help manage the journey and support all passengers on the vehicle. This would, for example, be the case where there are several children with special educational needs on the vehicle.

The transport operator is required to contact families before travel commences and families can arrange a 'meet and greet' to familiarise themselves with the child and parents.

**This is your opportunity to discuss the arrangements with the driver and offer advice on any helpful information so that your child can get off to a good start on the vehicle.**

Some parents arrange with the driver for their children to take a soft toy or music and headphones to listen to, at the discretion of the operator. This can be a very useful method of enabling children to enjoy their journey to school in cases where they may otherwise have been anxious or nervous.

## What if I have concerns about what is happening on the vehicle?

From time to time, a parent or their child may have some concerns over the travel arrangements and this is understandable, especially when travel commences or if there are any changes throughout the year.

Where this is the case, there are a number of ways in which the concerns may be addressed, being:

- Parents should first raise their concerns with the operator directly so that they may work together to resolve any difficulties.
- Where required, operators will look to include the school so that further support can be provided between all of the parties that work with the child on a daily basis.
- If difficulties persist, the Council will offer support and consider what reasonable adjustments have been made so far and any further options that can be explored. **New vehicles are not the expected solution under these circumstances.**

## Can I make my own arrangements and be paid instead?

Many parents prefer to make their own arrangements to take their child to school rather than they travel to school in a contracted vehicle.

The Council would pay parents two return journeys at 45p per mile to take their children to and from school, where it is more cost effective than providing contracted transport.

**For example, where a family reside 10 miles from the school, each return journey is 20 miles:**

**2 return journeys = 40 miles x 45p = £18 per day.**

**A typical term would be 65 school days = £1,170 per term.**

Where 45p is in excess of the cost of the Council providing transport, an alternative allowance of 17p can be considered.

### Benefits of fuel allowances

- You can take your child directly to school, allowing for significantly shorter journey times in some cases.
- Allows you flexibility to cover before and after school clubs, medical appointments etc, which are not covered by contracted vehicles.
- Your child would not be sharing transport with other children, so the time they leave home in the morning and arrive home in the afternoon would never change, nor would the driver.

## Travel Training

The Council has a Travel Training team who work with children with special educational needs or disabilities to provide them with the confidence and skills to travel on buses and trains. Help is also available for walking routes.

Being able to travel on public transport is a key life skill even after leaving schooling. It assists and encourages people make choices about how they live, go about daily life independently and fulfil their potential into adulthood.



## How does it work?

Our team of travel trainers train children on a one-to-one basis. This is usually on a home to school or college journey.

The trainer will create a training plan for the child that meets their needs. This will take into account suitable routes.

They will then visit you at home to talk through the training to make sure you are happy with it.

Initially, the trainer will accompany the child on their journey, giving encouragement and guidance, until the child develops the skills to travel on their own. This can be a gradual process at the child's own pace.

Sessions usually take place once a week but this can vary. Our trainers work during the school and college holidays.

They will provide regular feedback on their progress so you will always know how things are going.

Please visit [www.travel-training.co.uk](http://www.travel-training.co.uk) for more information or to apply!

## What can I do if I am not entitled?

Where there is no entitlement to transport under the law or Council policy, parents are responsible for arranging for their child to get to school.

Whilst it is not the responsibility of the Council to facilitate any arrangements, you may wish to consider:

- Walking or driving your child to school.
- Accompanying your child on public transport.
- Arranging Travel Training so that they may travel to school independently.
- Contacting any local school contractors to explore whether you are able to make a private arrangement for your child to travel in the vehicle (i.e. spare seat).
- Car share with another family.
- Arrange for a friend or family member to take your child to school, paying their fuel expenses if appropriate.

