

Home to School Travel Support Parent & Carer Guide Frequently Asked Questions



What is home to school travel support?

This is support from the Council to help children get to and from school when they can't reasonably manage the journey on their own due to distance, physical or mobility needs, SEND, or anxiety.

It's not just about whether a child can walk the route – it's about whether they can do it safely, consistently, and without significant distress, with or without support.

Decisions about travel support are based on national guidance and local policy, which can sometimes feel complex.



How is the distance to school measured?

Distance is usually measured using the shortest available walking route, not the driving distance. If your child has SEND, safety and ability to travel are just as important as distance.



What does "nearest suitable school" mean?

This usually means the closest school that can meet your child's needs and has a place available. In many cases, travel support is only automatically considered if this is also the nearest suitable school

. This is often one of the main reasons travel support is refused, so it's important to understand how this decision is made.



My child has SEND - does that mean they will automatically get transport?

Not always. Having SEND does not automatically mean your child will get travel support. Each application is looked at individually based on your child's needs

The Council will consider:

- Your child's needs
- Whether they can travel safely (with or without support)
- The distance to school

In reality, some children with SEND qualify, and some don't – it depends on how those needs impact the journey between home and school.



What counts as "too far" to walk?

Free travel is usually based on distance:

- Under 8: more than 2 miles
- Age 8 and over: more than 3 miles

But distance is not the only factor.

If your child cannot walk safely to school because of SEND or mobility needs, they may still be eligible – even if you live closer than the distances above.



What if my child attends a special school that isn't the nearest one?

This can happen, and there are different reasons why a child might attend a school that isn't the closest. For example, parent preference, a specific type of provision or historical placement decisions.

However, this can affect transport eligibility and the Council may decide that another (closer) school could meet your child's needs and, therefore, they are not responsible for providing transport.

Home to School Travel Support Parent & Carer Guide Frequently Asked Questions



So does naming a school on the EHCP guarantee transport?

Not always. Even if a school is named in the EHCP, the Council may still consider whether it is the nearest suitable option or whether the placement was agreed based on need or preference.



What if my child refuses transport due to anxiety or needs support?

This can be taken into account, but it is not always straightforward. The Council will usually look at whether your child can travel safely with the support already offered, rather than refusal on its own.

You may need to show why the current travel option isn't suitable for your child, what your child's specific needs are (e.g. anxiety, sensory differences, communication needs), what happens when transport is attempted (for example, distress, refusal, or inability to board) and what support would help your child to travel more successfully.

This might include things like a familiar adult or consistent staff member, adjustments to the environment (e.g. noise, seating) or gradual transitions or travel training.

It can be helpful to provide supporting information from school or professionals with your application, where possible. This can be a difficult area for families, especially where anxiety is high – you may need to clearly evidence how this affects your child's ability to travel.



My child can walk sometimes, but not reliably – what happens then?

This is where individual circumstances matter. The Council will consider whether your child can walk consistently and safely and the impact of things like anxiety, sensory needs, or fatigue.

This is often an area where families will need to provide clear evidence.



What kind of travel support could my child get?

Depending on your situation, support might include:

A bus pass

Your child travels to school using public transport. In some cases, a parent/carers may also be provided with a pass if the child cannot travel independently.

A mileage allowance

A payment to cover fuel costs if you drive your child to and from school yourself in your own car. This payment is calculated per mile for a set number of journeys each day.

A personal travel budget (PTB) – Post-16 only.

A payment given to you (or your young person if appropriate) to arrange your own travel. This gives more flexibility, but you are responsible for organising how your child gets to school.

A taxi or minibus

Transport arranged by the Council, often shared with other children.

This will include a driver and, where needed, a passenger assistant to support during the journey.

The Council will decide what is the most appropriate and cost-effective travel support option based on your child's needs as recorded on the application form and any supporting evidence provided.

Home to School Travel Support Parent & Carer Guide Frequently Asked Questions



Can I choose the type of travel support we get?

Not usually.

The Council decides what type of travel support is offered, based on your child's needs and what is considered reasonable and cost-effective.

However, you can share information or evidence if you feel a particular type of travel support would better meet your child's needs.

This might include:

- Medical or professional reports
- Information from school
- Details about what has or hasn't worked in practice

The Council will consider this as part of their decision, but it does not guarantee that a specific type of travel support will be agreed.



How do I apply?

Apply through Derby City Council online at www.derby.gov.uk. Provide proof of address, school details, and evidence of needs (e.g. EHCP, medical information).



Where can I get more help or advice?

Contact the Home to School Travel Service:
Email: schooltravel@derby.gov.uk
Phone: 01332 642716



When should I apply?

For the start of a new school year, applications should usually be submitted by 31 May. Applications made after this date will still be processed.



Do I have to pay for transport?

If your child is eligible, transport is usually provided free of charge, or you may receive a payment to help with travel costs

If you receive a payment, this is usually either:



·Mileage allowance

A set rate per mile (45p per mile) to cover fuel if you take your child to school yourself.

This is usually calculated based on a set journey (e.g. two return trips per day) and paid regularly, depending on the council's process.

·Personal Travel Budget (PTB) – Post-16 only.

A payment given to you (or your young person, if appropriate) so you can arrange your own transport.

This gives flexibility, but you are responsible for organising how your child gets to and from school.

Payments are usually:

- Based on agreed arrangements
- Reviewed if circumstances change
- Paid termly (in advance).



What if my application is refused?

You have the right to challenge the decision through a two-stage appeal process. You can also seek support from services such as SENDIASS.

The Council is responsible for making sure that transport is safe and appropriate for children and young people, including suitable vehicles, checked drivers and escorts, and appropriate training.