**Special Educational Needs (SEN) Home to School/College Travel Assistance**

Parent and Carers’ handbook

Important Advice

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| **Who is eligible for SEN Home to School Travel Assistance?**  | Whilst parents have ultimate responsibility to ensure that their children attend school, we have a statutory duty to make travel arrangements to support them where children and young people aged 5 to 16 have: * a Special Educational Need (SEN), a disability or mobility problem (including temporary conditions) if this means that they could not reasonably be expected to walk to school.

 In some instances we may provide discretionary support: * Children under 5 with special educational needs or disabilities travelling to specialist nurseries or primary schools.
* young people over the age of 16 with special education needs accessing further education

*Please refer to the London Borough of Croydon Policy for Travel Assistance for full details.* The support could be provided in one of the following ways: * ITT (Independent Travel Training)
* Personal Travel Budget (PTB)
* Travel Buddies
* A travel permit for public transport
* Transport to and from school in a mini-bus, people carrier or taxi. All vehicles will have the necessary adaptations for the specific needs of the child.
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| **How do I Apply for Travel Assistance?**  | Applications:* We encourage clients, parents and carers to complete the application for travel assistance on line. The form can be found at www.croydon.gov.uk/travelassistance
* When an application is submitted on line it reaches the travel service immediately.
* Where it is not possible to complete the application on line please contact Karen Mullins (for surnames A-K) or Koreen Sinclair (for surnames L-Z), who will arrange for one to be sent to you.
* Karen and Koreen will assess your eligibility for travel assistance and contact you with the outcome.
* If travel assistance is agreed, Karen or Koreen will contact you to arrange to develop a Personalised Travel Plan for the child/young person.
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| **What is a Personalised Travel Plan (PTP)** | Every child or young person who receives travel assistance in the London Borough of Croydon has a PTP completed for them. This document provides our travel service with more detailed information about their needs and enables us to identify how we can support them towards becoming an independent traveller wherever possible.The PTP is reviewed at least annually to ensure that all the information about the child/young person is current and that their travel needs are being met.  |
| **Independent Travel Training (ITT)** | The Council has adopted the vision to promote children and young people’s independence and health; promoting walking and the use of public transport. It is therefore our priority, where appropriate, for children and young people with special educational needs to be encouraged and supported to travel independently. Independent travel training (ITT) helps to provide young people with the skills they need to travel independently. We currently offer a rigorous and structured programme of support which is designed to promote independent travelling skills for young people with special educational needs to enable them to achieve a higher degree of personal freedom, confidence and a crucial life skill. We have a team of experienced and qualified travel trainers who provide independent travel training from home to school. Many young people have already benefitted greatly from our service.To be considered for ITT a young person must have the potential, once successfully trained, to travel to and from school completely independently (i.e. without an escort or home to school transport provision) and it would be expected that if successfully travel trained your child would travel independently to and from school.Assessment for travel training will only start when your child is ready. However, as part of the eligibility process for travel assistance you would be expected to agree to an assessment of suitability for independent travel training. |
| **Travel Buddies** | On completion on the PTP it may be decided that the travel needs of the child/young person can best be met by the provision of a travel buddy, who will accompany them to and from school/college on public transport.  |
| **Personal Travel Budget (PTB)** | It may be possible for the Council to provide parents/carers with an amount of money to create and manage personalised travel arrangements that best and most flexibly suit the needs of the family. If this is the case then the amount allocated will be calculated by Karen or Koreen and the PTB Agreement Letter will be sent to your home address for completion and signature.  |
| **What happens when travel assistance is agreed?** | You will be contacted by the Passenger Transport Team who will advise you of the transport arrangements that have been made for your child. **This may be done by text so please ensure that Passenger Transport are provided with a current telephone number.**  |
| **What type of training do the drivers and escorts have?**  | All drivers have passed the required driving tests and are appropriately licensed. It is desirable that drivers and escorts have knowledge of First Aid and they are asked to participate in any relevant courses, including safeguarding.  |

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| **How will the driver / escort know how to transport my child?**  | We work closely with the schools and with the professional teams who work with your child. They give us as much information as they can about the needs of your child. More importantly we need to get information from you about your child which is why it is important you provide as much information as possible on the application form.  |
| **Why is transport sometimes late in picking up/dropping off my child?**  | Unfortunately this can happen, there are various unavoidable reasons why transport may be delayed including: * Staff absence
* Traffic conditions/roadworks
* Weather conditions
* Breakdowns
* Potential delays in pickups if a child becomes ill during transport

When Passenger Transport are informed of this we will try and let parents/carers know as soon as we can.  |
| **How can parents and carers help keep us informed about your child’s needs?**  | To help keep transport running smoothly, there are a number of ways parents/carers can help us. Please tell Passenger Transport: * If there are any concerns regarding transport, drivers or passenger assistants (PA) and we will investigate with the transport providers.
* If you change your telephone number
* If you are planning to move house you will need to complete a new application form as soon as possible as your child’s eligibility will have to be reassessed to take into account the new address.
* When your child is unable to attend school for any reason so that we can inform the transport provider, please give as much notice as possible to Passenger Transport on 0208 8686 2215, please also contact this number when transport is to resume. **For safety reasons it is important that Passenger Transport are responsible for all contact with the transport providers rather than parents/carers.**

Please always be at the pick-up/drop off point at the scheduled time you have been given to make sure your child gets to and from school. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the child is taken to and collected from the vehicle, our drivers and passenger assistants will not come to your door. A ‘drop call’ can be arranged if the road is not visible from your property. Where possible please ensure that your child understands the standard of behaviour required whilst on transport. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that a responsible adult who is known to the crew/PTS is at the home address to receive your child in the afternoon.  |
| **How does my child’s medication get transported?**  | Passenger assistants do not give medication on transport. Please alert the PA if your child has prescription medication he/she needs to take to school. All medication should be in its prescription container with the child’s name and the name of the medicine. All medication should be signed for at the school.  |
| **Have the driver and escort been police checked?**  | The London Borough of Croydon requires that all drivers and escorts have been police checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).  |
| **Why wasn’t I given notice transport was going to change?**  | Where it is possible Passenger Transport try to give notice to parents and carers that their child’s transport is going to change. We recognise that change will affect pupils on transport. Unfortunately there are occasions where transport has to be changed at very short notice, for example if a driver or PA are ill and unable to work or the vehicle breaks down, which are beyond our control. We do make every effort to inform parents/carers if this happens.  |
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