

Transport for children with a statement of special educational needs

what you need to know



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Is it my responsibility to get my child to school?

Yes. It is your responsibility to get your child to school for the whole time they are there. You should think about how practical it is to choose a school which is not within walking distance, unless it is the designated or nearest school.

Will my child get free school transport?

Not necessarily, so it is very important to check. If they are not entitled you will need to think carefully about how your child is going to get to the school you prefer for the whole time they are there.

How do I check if my child can get free school transport?

If you apply for a place at your designated school or the nearest school to your home address, your child will get free transport if they live further than the statutory walking distance from the school.

The walking distance is defined as over:

- two miles from home to school for children of primary school age
- three miles from home to school for children of secondary school age*

You can find out which is your designated mainstream school at www.devon.gov.uk/schoolareamaps or by phoning My Devon Customer Service Centre on **0845 155 1019**.

If your child's statement says that their needs can be met at a mainstream school, the normal eligibility criteria will apply, unless a disability or medical condition means they cannot walk the specified distance for their age.

* please see section What if I am on a low income?

What if my child needs to attend a special school?

If your child has been placed at a special school by us, it will be their designated school and the normal eligibility criteria for transport will apply.

What if I am on a low income?

The statutory right to free transport for secondary school pupils from low income families provides a choice to one of the three nearest schools to the home address. However, transport will only be provided if the school is between two and six miles of the home address.

You can find details at www.devon.gov.uk/school_transport or phone My Devon Customer Service Centre on **0845 155 1019** and ask for the Transport for Secondary School Pupils leaflet.

Do I have to apply for transport?

The County Special Education Team (CSET) will send you a letter to let you know which school your child has a place at and a Transport Application Form. The application form gives us essential information about your child's needs and will help us to transport your child safely. It **must** be completed for all children requiring transport assistance, including those attending a special school. Please return the form as soon as possible as until this form is returned to us transport cannot be arranged. Information will be sent to escorts (if one is provided) and sometimes to the contractors providing the transport so that they can make sure your child is safe.



Is training available to help my child travel independently?

Yes. We are able to offer one to one training to some children and students to help them travel independently. If you would be interested in this scheme please phone My Devon Customer Service Centre on **0845 155 1019** for more details.

How will I know about the transport arrangements?

We will let you know what they are. If your child needs specialist equipment to travel, the Transport Co-ordination Service may contact you to assess their needs. If we have to change your child's transport arrangements at any time we will give you as much notice as possible.

Will my child be escorted?

Escorts may be provided for some children based on their particular needs and the service is reviewed at least once a year. All escorts and drivers are checked by the police and have identification badges; if they do not have a badge and you want to check their identity phone My Devon Customer Service Centre on **0845 155 1019**.

Escorts have information about your child, but you should make sure that they are fully aware of your child's medical condition, any behaviour issues and the best way to deal with problems.

How long will the journey take?

We try to keep journey times as short as possible. Sometimes children may have a longer journey to reach a special school. The transport may not necessarily use the most direct route because it may pick up other children.

Where will my child be picked up from?

You will be notified where your child will be picked up from. They will need to walk to a pick up point unless a disability or medical condition means they cannot walk that far. You are responsible for your child's safety between home and the pick up point and for putting them on the vehicle. You need to make sure that your child is ready to be collected five minutes before the pick up time. If the vehicle has to leave without your child, it is your responsibility to get them to school.

Drivers do not sound their horns or leave their vehicles to alert you of their arrival.

What if the vehicle doesn't arrive?

If transport does not arrive, you should telephone the My Devon Customer Service Centre on **0845 155 1019**. They will find out why there is a delay and may arrange for another vehicle to be sent. If you don't go with your child to the pick up point make sure that they know what to do if the vehicle is more than 20 minutes late. For example this could be phoning a parent or going to a neighbour.

Where will my child be dropped off on the return journey?

We will tell you the estimated return time and drop off point. It is your responsibility to be at the drop off point to meet your child five minutes before the vehicle is due. If the drop off point is your home address and you are not at home, the driver will finish the route and try again. If you have not returned, we will arrange for your child to be taken into care by our social care service. If your child is to be left with another responsible adult you must give written permission for this to the Special Assistance Transport Team Officers. We cannot leave your child on their own or in the care of anybody else without written permission.

What if my child needs to go to a different address?

If you need your child to be collected from, or returned to, another address, you need to make this request in writing to the Special Assistance Transport officers, giving at least five working days notice. We will try to meet these requests if no extra cost is involved, and it does not cause problems for other passengers. Send your request to The Special Assistance Transport officers, One Capital Court, Bittern Road, Sowton, Exeter EX2 7FW.



Can my child use school transport to travel to and from respite placements and after school clubs?

Transport to respite placements must be requested through your child's social worker.

School transport is provided at the normal school times and cannot be used for after school clubs, unless your child is travelling on a public bus or train and there is a later service.

Can my child eat and drink on school transport?

Eating and drinking is not allowed on vehicles. If your child has a medical condition which means they need to eat regularly you must notify us of this in advance.

Can my child take equipment on school transport?

Additional equipment and bags will only be carried if previously agreed and:

- there is enough room on the vehicle
- they can be stored safely or secured
- it does not incur any extra cost.

Other options should be considered, for example, is the equipment available at school?

If your child has a lot of bags or equipment please do not expect the escort or driver to physically carry them.

What happens if my child behaves badly?

The standard of behaviour we expect is explained in the Code of Conduct leaflet which will be sent to you to read with your child. You and your child (if able) will need to sign the transport application form to say that you agree to follow the Code of Conduct. We cannot provide transport until we have the signed form. If your child is badly behaved and causes a disruption or jeopardises the safety of passengers or road users, we can change their transport arrangements, or exclude them from transport temporarily or permanently. It will then be your responsibility to get your child to school. Your child's special needs will be taken into consideration before any action is taken.

If your child causes deliberate damage to a vehicle the contractor will ask you to pay for the cost of repairs.

What if our address changes?

Please tell the Special Assistance Transport Team so that they can check that you are still entitled to school transport and change the arrangements. You must give at least one week's notice for transport to be changed.

What if I need to cancel my child's transport?

If your child is not able to attend school you need to telephone the My Devon Customer Service Centre on **0845 155 1019**, or the contractor as soon as possible.

If your child has been off school you will need to contact the Special Assistance Transport Team on the My Devon number **0845 155 1019**, or the contractor, at least one day before you need the transport service to start again. If your child no longer needs school transport please contact us on the number above and let us know.

What happens when my child reaches 16 years old?

There is no automatic entitlement to free education transport if your child is over 16 at the beginning of the academic year (1 September). This is regardless of whether they are working a year behind. However, we will help with travel expenses in certain circumstances. Where help is given, we pay most of the cost, but you will be asked to make a contribution. The level of contribution is set by us and we review it every year. The contribution is waived for families getting the maximum level of Working Tax Credit or benefits which would have entitled their child to free school meals.

To qualify for help your child must:

- live in Devon (excluding Plymouth and Torbay) and attend a full-time course of education - this is at least 16 hours of supervised study
- attend their designated establishment - you can find out which is your designated mainstream school at www.devon.gov.uk/schoolareamaps or by phoning My Devon Customer Service Centre on **0845 155 1019**
- live over three miles from the school or college using the shortest available pedestrian route
- be under 19 years old on 31 August of the academic year you are applying for transport for.

Support is only available after age 19, if your child has been studying a specific course for people with learning difficulties and has to attend after the age of 19 to complete the course. Support will then continue until the end of the academic year during which your child reaches the age of 21, as long as they stay on the same course at the same college.



How do I apply for post 16 transport?

- Application forms will be sent to post 16 students at their home address during the spring term.
- All post 16 students need to complete an application form every year and sign to agree to the Code of Conduct.
- If your child can have transport we will send you a payment form.
- You will need to return the payment form with payment or proof of a means-tested benefit.
- If your child is not eligible we will send you a letter explaining why.
- Application and payment forms must be returned by the date on the forms. If they are late we may not be able to provide transport from the beginning of term and you will need to transport your child at your own expense.



For more information contact My Devon Customer Service Centre on **0845 155 1019** or visit www.devon.gov.uk/school_transport

If you would like this in an alternative format such as large print, Braille or tape, or in a different language, please contact the council's Information Centre on: 01392 380101 or email: info@devon.gov.uk

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