

Parent/Carer guide to:

Special Educational Needs/Disability (SEND) Transport



This guide for parents and carers of students with Special Educational Needs or disabilities will help you with the following topics –

Your responsibilities

- How long will a vehicle wait?
- Who is responsible for taking my child to the vehicle?
- Who is responsible for making sure my child is safely secured in the vehicle?
- Do I have to provide my own car seat?
- What if my child requires Specialised equipment whilst travelling?
- What if my child is ill and unable to attend school?

General questions that you may have

- Can I have a say about who my child travels with?
 - Will my child be able to travel alone?
 - Will my child have a passenger assistant?
 - Can my child keep the same driver and/or passenger assistant?
 - Can my child keep the same taxi company?
 - Can my child continue to travel with the same children?
 - How much notice will I receive if there is a change of driver or taxi company?
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- All transport arrangements are made by Suffolk County Council Passenger Transport.
 - We will contact parents by letter/e-mail with full details of pick up times once the arrangements have been finalised. You should have full details on these arrangements 10 working days prior to the transport arrangement starting.
 - If you have not received the details of your child's transport by then, please contact our contact centre on 0345 606 6173 and they will be happy to help you.

Your responsibilities

How long will the vehicle wait?

The vehicle will not be able to wait for more than five minutes after the agreed pick-up time, so please make sure your child is ready in good time.

Who is responsible for taking my child to the vehicle?

A responsible person must bring your child out to the vehicle at the agreed time (or in good time) and collect them from the vehicle in the afternoon. We do not expect drivers or passenger assistants to ring doorbells. Drivers and passenger assistants should not leave vehicles unattended.

Failure to ensure that a responsible adult is at home to accept their child may result in the child being taken to a suitable safe place e.g. a Social Care premises or a local police station. It would be the parent/carer's responsibility to arrange for their travel home and they would be liable for any costs incurred.

Who is responsible for ensuring my child is safely secured in the vehicle?

Drivers and passenger assistants cannot lift children in and out of vehicles. It is the responsibility of the driver/passenger assistant that all wheelchairs/buggies are secured into the vehicle.

Do I have to provide my own car seat?

Suffolk County Council will provide car seats. There are 2 types of car seat available:

- Britax Evolver (5 point harness)
- Britax 123 (booster with a back)

You will need to indicate which car seat you require if you receive a transport request form.

What if my child requires specialised equipment whilst travelling?

If your child requires specialised equipment (buckle safe etc) you will be able to request this when you receive a transport request form.

What if my child is ill and unable to attend school?

If your child is ill and is unable to attend school, we ask parents to contact the transport provider direct to avoid a wasted journey.

You will be given a contact number when the transport is arranged.

General questions that you may have

Can I have a say about who my child travels with?

We have to make the best use of the vehicles we have, so we cannot give parents or carers the right to choose who their child will travel with. Careful thought is given to the children who share a vehicle, and changes will be made if difficulties occur that cannot be resolved in other ways.

Will my child be able to travel alone?

Children are normally expected to share a vehicle, even though this may result in longer journey times. In exceptional cases a separate taxi will be provided for children with complex needs, or if circumstances mean there is no alternative. We will follow Department for Education (DfE) guidance on journey lengths.

Will my child have a passenger assistant?

We don't automatically provide an escort or passenger assistant on all vehicles. If there is evidence that it is needed, a shared or individual passenger assistant will be provided.

Can my child keep the same driver and/or passenger assistant?

We realise that children and parents prefer for the least number of changes to occur. We ask companies to try and keep the drivers and passenger assistants consistent (as much as possible) however sickness, annual leave and operational issues sometimes mean that a different driver or passenger assistant has to change for a short term or long term basis.

We encourage operators to give you as much notice as possible of any change, however this is not always possible especially if there is a safeguarding concern raised.

Can my child keep the same taxi company?

We realise that children and parents prefer for the least number of changes to occur. However as a local authority we must abide by the procurement regulations in law to ensure we always get the best price for all contracts. There are many reasons why a transport contract has to be changed and this may include –

- An emergency situation that has occurred from a safeguarding concern
- A vehicle has failed a safety check and the company may lose their contract with us
- More efficient transport route required

Can my child continue to travel with the same children?

Sometimes we may need to change transport to make the best use of the vehicles that we have, this may mean a change of the route that it takes and it may not pick up the same children. We only do this when we have to.

It may also be that an emergency situation may have occurred from a health concern or a safety/behavioural concern from another child and children need to be moved to another vehicle.