



**STOCKPORT**  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Special Educational Needs  
(SEN)  
Education Travel Policy**

## English

If you need assistance in Hindi, Punjabi, Chinese, Polish, Albanian, Russian or Braille or an audio tape, contact the Travel Coordination Service on 0161-474 2504

## Arabic

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى المساعدة في الهندية والأوردو والبنجابية والصينية والبولندية ، والألبانية والروسية أو طريقة برايل أو تسجيلًا صوتيًا ، اتصل بموظف القبول على

## Africans

As jy hulp nodig in die Hindi, Punjabi, Sjinees, Pools, Albanees, Russies of braille of 'n bandhulp, kontak die Admissions Officer op

## Albanian

Nëse keni nevojë për ndihmë në Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, kineze, polake, shqiptare, rus apo Braille, ose një kasetë audio, kontaktoni Regjistrimet Zyrtari për

## Chinese

如果您需要援助的印地文，烏爾都語，旁遮普語，漢語，波蘭，阿爾巴尼亞，俄羅斯或盲文或錄音帶，請與招生官

## Hindi

Yadi āpa hindī, urdū, pañjābī, cīnī, pōlīśa, albēniyana, rūśī yā brēla yā ēka ṛḍiyō tēpa, samparka mēm pravēśa kē adhikārī para mēm sahāyatā kī jarūrata

## Russian

Если вы нуждаетесь в помощи на хинди, урду, панджаби, китайский, польский, албанский, русский или азбукой Брайля или аудиокассете, контакт приема сотрудника на

## Persian

اگر شما نیاز به کمک در زبان هندی، پنجابی، چینی، لهستانی، آلبانی، روسی و یا بریل یا نوار صوتی، تماس با پذیرش افسر در

## Polish

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy w języku hindi, urdu, punjabi, chiński, polski, albański, rosyjski lub Braille'a lub taśm audio, o kontakt z Admissions Officer na

## Ukrainian

Якщо ви потребуєте допомоги на гінді, панджабі, китайська, польська, албанська, російська або азбукою Брайля або аудіокасеті, контакт прийому співробітника на

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## **1 What does this policy cover?**

Stockport Council has a duty to provide free home to school travel support in certain circumstances, and this policy sets out the home to education facility travel arrangements Stockport Council will make for those children and young people aged 0-25 with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC) who are eligible for travel assistance and who have special educational needs, complex medical needs or a disability/disabilities.

The travel support arrangements for young people of sixth form age receiving education and training in college or school are published separately each academic year in the local authority's Post 16 Transport Policy Statement.

## **2 Principles**

Stockport Council is committed to the following principles:

- Working in partnership with parents/carers/personal assistants/ Schools & Colleges to support them with their legal responsibility to ensure their child/young person attends school.
- Promoting healthy, sustainable and safe travel solutions.
- Actively engaging with child/young people and involving them in the decision-making process.
- Promoting independent travel for children and young people wherever possible, taking account of their age and individual needs;
- Supporting child/young person who have disabilities or who experience short-term crises.
- Ensuring travel arrangements are as reliable and stress free as possible so pupils arrive at school in a calm state and able to learn.

Stockport Council is committed to equality of opportunity and the celebration of diversity. It is opposed to all forms of discrimination.

## **3 Duties to provide home to education travel assistance**

### **Parental responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of parent(s) or carer(s) to ensure their child (of compulsory school age) attends school. However, the local authority will provide travel assistance to eligible pupils.

Even where transport or travel assistance is provided by the local authority, it remains the parent(s) or carer(s)' responsibility to ensure their child attends school and that s/he is accompanied to and from the transport /pick up location as appropriate.

### **Statutory requirements to provide free home to education facility travel assistance**

Stockport Council has a duty to make such travel arrangements that they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school or college for "eligible" children & young persons. This document sets out when students are eligible.

The local authority also has discretionary powers to provide transport free or at a charge for those children/young people who would not be eligible to free home to school support.

Where there is a health requirement as part of the transport arrangements (e.g. administration of medicines or medical procedures) and the child / young person meets the NHS Continuing Health Care requirements, NHS funding may be provided for a medically trained support worker to act as a passenger assistant on the home to school transport. This provision is jointly funded with Education in line with the Continuing Care for Children and Young People Operational Policy. In most cases this is the same worker who will support them 1-1 at school/college. The support required will be agreed as part of the EHC planning process.

Travel assistance will NOT be provided for other journeys, such as:

- to breakfast or after school clubs
- to work experience, taster or open days
- to part-time provision off the school site organised by the school e.g. to vocational classes at college
- for movement between educational establishments
- to before or after school activities
- from temporary addresses
- for students on exchange visits (where the receiving family is responsible for arranging/paying for any transport required).
- to/from dental, clinical, medical or hospital appointments
- at a different time due to detention
- due to parental work or childcare arrangements
- to any site other than the registered base
- at a different time due to exclusion
- to other education provision as the result of detention, other than to Day 6 provision

### **Early years (Nursery / reception class) travel assistance**

There is no statutory requirement for Stockport Council to provide free travel assistance to attend nursery school / school, until they are of compulsory school age (5-16).

Where the child is in receipt of an EHC Plan, it would still be expected that parent(s) carer(s) would support the child to enable them to attend nursery / reception class.

Travel assistance may be provided in exceptional circumstances (such as parental disability / placement at specialist provision), but this will be at the discretion of Stockport Council and may not be provided free of charge.

Where the child is classed as “looked after”, or has a disability (with or without an EHC Plan) which means that they are assessed as having to attend a specialist nursery / school place which is not their local provision, travel assistance may be provided.

## **Home to school travel assistance for compulsory school age students (5-16)**

Where a child is assessed as being eligible to receive free home to school travel support, transport will be provided at the start and end of the school day (or at the beginning/end of the week or term as appropriate for those in residential placements).

It is expected that, where appropriate, students who receive home to school travel assistance will travel independently to school as soon as they have the ability to do so. When students are of secondary school age, all travel assistance assessments will include an assessment for Independent Travel Training, with the aim to ensure that, where possible, students will be able to travel independently before finish their compulsory schooling.

Students who are assessed as being able to travel independently, but choose not to participate, will not receive supported transport (i.e. taxi / minibus service provided by the Council) if the route to school is deemed as reasonable to their needs.

*e.g. A young person who is able to travel to school (within Stockport) with a maximum of one change of public transport and no more than 15 minutes' walk at either end would be deemed as reasonable.*

## **Post 16 travel assistance (16-25)**

For eligible Post 16 students in receipt of an EHC Plan, it is expected that, where appropriate, students will have received the appropriate support to enable them to travel independently to school / college / training or employment facility. Where additional support is required to achieve this aim, an assessment for Independent Travel Training will form part of the travel assistance assessment.

Where the student is unable to travel independently, or it is deemed that public transport is insufficient to enable attendance, additional travel support may be provided. This support will only be provided at the start / end of the day. We will not provide support to suit individual timetable requirements.

*Please note, the Council is not obliged to provide free travel support to students of sixth form age and a charge may be applied.*

Students who are assessed as being able to travel independently, but choose not to participate, will not receive supported transport (i.e. taxi / minibus service provided by the Council) if the route to school is deemed as reasonable to their needs.

*e.g. A young person who is able to travel to school/college (within Stockport) with a maximum of one change of public transport and no more than 15 minutes' walk at either end would be deemed as reasonable.*

Where students are able to travel independently, and are accessing public transport to attend their educational facility, they may receive support to cover transport costs.

Full details of the Post 16 Transport Policy can be found on the Stockport Council website, or on the Stockport Local Offer / SEN support website.

Where the young person is no longer in receipt of an EHC Plan, assessment for eligibility to travel assistance will transfer to the Adult Social Care Travel Assistance Policy.

**Access to Work**

*Young persons over the age of 16, with additional support needs (a disability, physical health condition or a mental health condition), who are in paid employment (including self-employment, or self-arranged work experience) may be entitled to additional support, including their transport needs via the Department for Work & Pensions Access to Work scheme.*

For further details please visit [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

## 4 Eligible children / young people

This policy sets out the local authority's responsibilities to assess the transport needs and provide support for eligible pupils of compulsory school age (aged 5 – 16 years) and Post 16 students in full time education up to the age of 25, and in particular those who have additional transport needs as a result of:

- their special educational needs (SEN)
- complex medical needs and/or
- disability/disabilities which mean assistance with travel to and from school/college is necessary.

### Who is eligible for support

A child will be eligible for free home to school transport if:

- They live more than walking distance from their nearest suitable school/college, or
- They are unable to walk in safety to and from their nearest school/college because of the route, or
- They are unable to walk to and from their nearest suitable school/college, as accompanied by an appropriate adult, due to their special educational need and/or disability.

### Walking distance

A child/young person will be eligible for free home to school transport if:

- the child/young person lives in the Stockport local authority area *and*
- the child/young person is attending their agreed named\* school (or PRU) or nearest suitable school/college *and*
- the child is aged under 8 years and lives more than two miles from the agreed or nearest suitable school; or the child is aged 8 years or over at the start of the school year and lives more than three miles from the agreed or nearest suitable school/college.

If you are in receipt of free school meals or Working Tax Credit your child will be eligible for free home to school transport if

- the child/young person lives in the Stockport local authority area *and*
- the child/young person is attending their agreed named\* school (PRU) or one of the three nearest suitable schools *and*
- the child is aged under 11 years and lives more than two miles from their nearest suitable or agreed school;
- or the child is aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year and lives more than three miles and up to six miles from their preferred school/college (or between three and fifteen miles in the case of a denominational school).

\*Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 (June 2014)

9.214 "The parents or young person's preferred school or college might be further away from their home than the nearest school or college that can meet the child or young person's SEN. In such a case, the local authority can name the nearest school or college if it considers it to be appropriate for meeting the child or young person's SEN. If the parents prefer the school or college that is further away, the local authority may agree to this but is able to ask the parents to provide some or all of the transport funding."

### **Unsafe walking route**

A child/young person will be eligible for free home to school transport if:

- the child/young person lives in the Stockport local authority area *and*
- the child/young person is attending their agreed named school (PRU) or nearest suitable school/college *and*
- the route to school is such that the child/young person could not walk it (accompanied as necessary) in reasonable safety

### **Medical reasons**

The local authority may in some cases provide home to school transport if the child or young person is unable to walk to school due to their medical needs. This will need to be supported by medical evidence. To apply for assistance please contact the Travel Coordination Service for an application form – see contact details at end of policy. Where such transport is provided under medical grounds the case will be reviewed on a regular basis and continued supporting medical evidence will be requested.

It remains the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school while the application for support is being considered.

### **Personal budgets**

Transport costs may be provided as part of the Personal Budget where one is agreed and included in the EHC plan as part of the special education provision.

## **5 How eligibility is assessed**

### **Measurement of distance**

The distance between the home and school is measured using the nearest available walking route from the child/young person's address to the nearest access for pupils at the school.

Geographic Information System (GIS) or comparative systems are used to measure this distance accurately in Stockport. This distance may include made up i.e. paved footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads.

### **How safety of route is assessed**

The local authority undertakes a risk assessment of walking routes using guidance from Road Safety GB, which takes into account factors such as traffic volume, pavements, speed limited and pedestrian crossings.

In assessing whether the route would be unsafe for a child, the local authority takes into account the age and abilities/disabilities and needs of the child.

The assessment takes into account that the child will be accompanied as necessary by a parent/carer or responsible adult. However, circumstances of the parent/carers will be taken into account, for example if they have a disability that would prevent them from accompanying their child. (It is expected that parents who work will make arrangements for their child to be accompanied as necessary).

### **Reviews**

Eligibility to home to school transport and the level of a child's transport needs will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the type of transport provided is appropriate and cost effective.

This review will provide an opportunity to consider whether the needs of the individual child have changed and if the level or type of transport support provided should be changed. It also provides an opportunity for parents and young people to give feedback to the local authority on any issues or concerns.

*A Parent/Carer may request a review of the travel assistance provided if they feel that the needs of their child have changed significantly. Any arrangement in place will continue until the review has been completed.*

## **6 What type of travel assistance will be offered?**

Where home to school transport assistance is provided by the local authority it will be for one return journey each day at the beginning and end of the normal school day (the session times approved by the school governing body) to the registered base.

It is the responsibility of the parent to make any necessary arrangements for the child/young person to be transported at any other time and to/from any other location.

The local authority will determine which type of transport or travel support will be offered based on the needs of the child. The local authority has a duty to ensure the efficient use of its resources and may alter transport arrangements from time to time. The nature of school placements means that overall arrangements have to be flexible and take into account new children starting, or children leaving during the year. Frequent changes of transport operators are avoided wherever possible to ensure children benefit from consistency and stability. However, changes may need to be made to the provision and parent(s)/carer(s) will be given notification in advance of any changes.

The transport provided for eligible pupils will depend on their age, needs, and the school attended, and may include:

### **Local bus services**

For those children who are able, and where there is a suitable service, the local authority will provide a pass for them to travel to and from school on their local public transport bus, (train or tram). Where a child has been provided with a bus (or train/tram) pass, it remains the parents/carers' responsibility to accompany them to and from the bus stop as necessary.

### **Contracted coaches, mini buses, taxis and private hire cars**

If the child's needs mean that additional support is needed, or if there is no suitable local bus service available the local authority may provide transport using either local coach, minibus, taxi or private hire operators. All home to school transport contractors for the local authority have to meet the relevant operator, driver and vehicle licensing requirements, including a CRB / DBS check for staff.

All home to school transport service users can expect:

- transport provision in accordance with contractual standards and national legislation.
- Drivers (and passenger assistants) greet passengers and parents politely and ensure that all passengers travel in comfort and safety.
- Drivers (and passenger assistants) to have undertaken criminal records / Disclosure & Barring Service checks.
- Drivers will be appropriately licensed and drivers (and passenger assistants) will undertake disability and other appropriate training to meet the needs of children in their care.
- To be communicated with in a way they can understand.

- The conduct by transport staff on the vehicle and at collection and drop off points to be of an acceptable standard.

### **Pick up and Drop off Points**

After assessing entitlement to transport, parents/carers will be notified of the transport arrangements for their child. This will include details of the operator(s) and the telephone number/contact details for the operator.

It will also say where the child should be picked up/dropped off. In exceptional cases, this may be at home. (It is a parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure the child is accompanied to/from the pick up point as necessary).

Transport for eligible children is provided from reasonably near home to reasonably near school and usually children will be required to walk (accompanied by parents if they feel it is appropriate) no more than one mile to or from a designated pick up/drop off point.

### **Pick up and Drop off Timings**

Where transport has been arranged by the local authority, parents/carers will be notified of the pickup and drop off times. The local authority will do everything reasonably practicable to ensure transport arrives within 5 minutes of this allocated time (although traffic, road and weather conditions may affect these timings).

The transport operator/provider is responsible for communicating any major delays to the parent(s)/carer(s) as soon as possible.

If a child/young person is not ready when the vehicle arrives at the designated time, the contractor will not wait more than five minutes, as to do so would affect attendance and punctuality of the other children. If your child/young person is not ready to board the vehicle, it becomes the parents/carers' responsibility to ensure that their child/young person attends school, another vehicle will not be sent.

Parents are responsible for notifying the Travel Coordination Service if their child is unable to travel that day to avoid ineffective use of transport resources.

### **Passenger assistants**

The local authority will assess the transport needs of pupils with special needs and medical needs/disabilities and will provide a passenger assistant where necessary for the child's safety/welfare.

The need for a passenger assistant on a vehicle or to assist a particular pupil will be assessed by the appropriate local authority officer on advice from relevant professionals/agencies including the school and special needs staff.

Passenger assistants are provided for the safety of the children on the vehicle and they are not expected to leave a vehicle to collect a child from the child's home as this may leave other children unsupervised in the vehicle. It is the parent(s)/carer(s) responsibility to accompany their child/young person to and meet the child from the vehicle. (However, discretion will be used if the parent(s)/carer(s) are genuinely unable to undertake this themselves).

**Journey times**

Every effort will be made to keep journey times to a minimum. In normal circumstances primary age children where ever possible should not spend more than three quarters of an hour being transported between home and school and for secondary age pupils the time spent in travelling should not exceed one and a quarter hours.

There may be times when it is not possible to meet these journey times due to circumstances outside the local authority's control such as traffic congestion, accidents, and adverse weather and schools proximity to the pick-up point.

## 7 Withdrawal of transport

The local authority aims to maintain the highest standards of safety and security for all pupils travelling to and from school. However, parents also have a responsibility to help maintain safe and secure travelling arrangements for the benefit of all support users.

Pupils who receive home to school transport (or independent travel support) will be expected to follow the same behaviour codes as they do in school.

It is the responsibility of parents in all circumstances to ensure their children get to school, and parents are responsible for the behaviour of their child whilst travelling to and from school. The local authority may withdraw transport support where the child's *deliberate* behaviour presents a safety risk to staff or other passengers, or amounts to a persistent or serious abuse of the system. Behaviour that endangers other road users, pedestrians, passengers or the driver/other staff, or causes damage to the vehicle cannot be tolerated.

Following investigations with the operator, school and other professional staff as appropriate, the local authority may withdraw the provision of free home to school support where it is determined that a child/young person has demonstrated such poor behaviour that:

- (a) puts at risk the driver, other staff, themselves, other passengers on the vehicle and/or;
- (b) uses threatening or violent language and/or;
- (c) causes damage to the vehicle, and/or.
- (d) is persistently disruptive.

In the event of unacceptable behaviour, the local authority, after consultation with the school and the transport operator, in the first instance the local authority will advise parents by letter of any incident that has occurred, including a warning that if such behaviour continues transport may be withdrawn.

If unacceptable behaviour continues, parents will be notified in writing of the intention to withdraw transport for a defined period, or on a permanent basis. If transport is withdrawn in these circumstances parents will be required to make their own arrangements. The action taken will be confirmed with the school and contractor.

The withdrawal of free home to school support may be either temporary or permanent at the discretion of the local authority, having regard to the circumstances of the pupil's behaviour where this has been serious or persistent. 'Temporary withdrawal' shall be for a specified number of weeks and 'permanent' shall be for the remainder of the school year or longer if justified by the circumstances.

## **8 Promoting independent travel**

Stockport Council has a commitment to developing children's inclusion wherever possible, and to promote healthy and sustainable school travel.

The local authority has introduced an Independent Travel Training scheme that focuses on enabling eligible children and young people to travel independently to and from school/college. Pupils will be assessed by the local authority (and school) and in discussion with parents/carers and the young person. This enables them to develop travel independence at their own pace and, while challenging them to achieve, allows them to reach a level of attainment with which they are comfortable.

Independent Travel Training covers various topics, and the type of training and level of support will depend on the needs of the individual student. Training will include:

- Personal safety and security
- Road safety
- Recognising and avoiding dangerous situations
- Following directions
- Boarding the correct bus in the right direction
- Buying tickets

The scheme includes classroom and practical support to develop young peoples' skills enabling them to use local buses, walk (and for some, cycle) to and from school.

### **Walking buses**

A walking bus scheme involves groups, or 'buses', of children walking between home and school quickly and safely under the guidance of at least two trained adult volunteers all of whom will have the relevant clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau to work with child/young person. Walking buses are particularly suitable for families living within a short distance of their school.

Parent(s)/carer(s) can drop their children/young person off at a handy pick up point near their home or even at their front door, as the Walking Bus follows a predetermined, regular and safe route to school.

### **Cycling support**

For some young people who are eligible to free school transport, a cycle allowance may be offered in some circumstances as an alternative to a bus pass. To be eligible for this, the parents/carers must agree to this option and the child/young person should have successfully completed a cycling proficiency course. Cycle helmet/relevant safety equipment must be used and the school policy must allow for cycle use.

## **9 How to apply for travel support**

Each request for home to school transport is considered on an individual basis.

If you think your child/young person is eligible for free or assisted support, or you would like further help and guidance on whether your child qualifies for supported travel, please contact the Travel Coordination Service - see contact details at the end of the policy.

Travel Coordination Service  
c/o 3rd Floor, Stopford House  
Piccadilly  
Stockport  
SK1 3XE

Tel: 0161 474 2504/2505/2508

Email: [TravelCo-ordination@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:TravelCo-ordination@stockport.gov.uk)

## **10 Concerns, Problems, Compliments and Complaints**

If you have any concerns or have any feedback about the transport arrangements for your child/young person please contact the Travel Coordination Service. Parents (and young people) are encouraged to give feedback on all aspects of the service, whether positive or negative.

## **11 Appeals against decisions for not providing support**

Parent(s)/carer(s) may appeal against the Local authority's decision not to provide travel support. Appeals need to be submitted in writing (including email). Appeals will be reviewed by a Senior Officer who will review the evidence regarding eligibility, the distance measurement in relation to the statutory walking distance, the safety of the route and type of travel support offered.

If you wish to appeal, you will need to contact the Travel Coordination Service in writing within 20 working days from receipt of our travel assistance decision. You will need to include details of why you think the decision should be reviewed and give any details of any personal and/or family circumstances you believe that we should consider.

### **Stage one: Review by a Senior Officer**

A Senior Officer will review the original decision within 20 working days of receipt of the Parent's written request and will send a detailed written notification of the outcome of the review detailing

- The nature of the decision reached
- How the review was conducted
- Who we consulted as part of the process
- What factors were considered
- The rationale behind the decision
- Details of how you can elevate your appeal to stage two (if appropriate)

If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Senior Officer, you may request for your appeal to be elevated to a review by an Independent Appeals Panel.

### **Stage two: Independent Appeal Panel**

The parent has **20 working days** from receipt of the Local Authority's stage 1 decision to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage 2 – appeal to an Independent Transport Appeal Panel, who will take into account the family's personal circumstances when making their decision.

Appeals will be heard **within 40 working days** of receipt of the appeal request.

Appeal dates and information about the appeal process can be obtained from The Secretary to the Independent Appeals Panel, Corporate and Support Services, Democratic Services, Town Hall, Stockport, SK1 3XE