

## **Frequently asked questions:**

### **Transport assistance for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans**

Transport assistance may be provided for children who live in the Rotherham Borough, are aged 5 to 16 years old and have an education health and care plan (EHCP) or a previous statement of special educational needs (SEN).

If your child does not have a current EHCP but you feel they have mobility difficulties which may prevent them using public transport services, please use the online application form. You can also look at the home to school transport policy.

### **My child will be attending a specialist school in Rotherham but I live somewhere else, so who do I contact?**

You will need to contact the council who sends you a council tax bill as they are financially responsible for your child's education and the decision about transport assistance.

### **My child will be attending a specialist school outside Rotherham so how do I get help with transport?**

If Rotherham Council has issued an Education, Health and Care Plan for your child, they will be responsible for deciding what help you may be given and what type of transport assistance will be suitable for your child.

### **My child cannot walk distances to school but they can use our local public bus services. Can they get free travel?**

Yes. You can check if your child is entitled to a disabled person's pass and free travel at [www.rotherham.gov.uk](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk) Search for 'disabled person's pass'. If they qualify, your child can travel to and from school or college free of charge and also free travel during weekends and school holidays. You can visit [www.travelsouthyorkshire.com](http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com) for further advice on how to apply for help towards the cost of public transport costs for your family and journey options or contact Traveline on 01709 515151.

### **My child is moving to secondary school and wants to travel with their friends but I am not sure if this is suitable for them?**

Many children travel to and from school by walking, cycling or using public buses and trams. During their last year of primary school children can be involved in schemes to help them develop their independence and learn their new journey.

### **I want to take my child to and from their new school so can I get any help?**

Yes. Transport assistance can be a number of options and some families may request a personal transport budget (PTB) as the best option for them. This will be assessed and you will be given a decision. If a PTB is awarded you can only be paid

when your child is in the vehicle (for example, one journey in the morning and one journey in the afternoon).

### **I am worried about my child travelling on a minibus to their new school as they used to walk with me to their local school?**

If the Council agrees the distance to school is too far for your child to walk, a bus pass may be awarded, or your child may be awarded a seat on a minibus. If your child has complex special educational needs then a home visit can sometimes be arranged so you and your child can see the vehicle and meet the driver before your child starts travelling. You and your child could also meet a transport driver on a school site (with permission from school staff). Most schools will offer some transition or visits before a child joins them full time and where possible this may include some of their transport journeys.

### **Does the Council own the minibuses that cover my child's school transport?**

No. The minibuses are contracted approved transport operators who supply journeys to and from schools on behalf of the Council. All their staff have current DBS checks and are approved by the Council. They receive additional training about wheelchair safety, safeguarding and disability awareness. They can also receive extra training which may be provided by a school or academy.

### **My child has complex needs and a medical condition which may affect them during travel. How do I know they will be safe?**

Your child's transport needs will be assessed before your child travels. We ask you to provide as much information as you can about your child and sometimes you may need to provide a medical report. Children with medical needs, for example epilepsy, will need to have a transport care plan for which you will need to provide your written consent. Some of this information has to be shared confidentially with a transport provider.

### **How is my child's transport requirement assessed?**

Your child's travel needs will be assessed using the written information provided to us and the online application form. The Council may need to contact you for further details and ask you for an up to date medical report. Sometimes an officer from the passenger services team may visit you and your child at home to check for example if they are a wheelchair user and need a transport care plan. We may need to see a copy of your child's Education, Health and Care Plan. Any information that is provided to the Council will be treated in a confidential manner.

### **Will my child's transport assistance be provided free of charge?**

Yes if your child is aged five to 16 years old. There is a contributory charge for children under five years old attending early years provision and for students over 16 attending sixth form. If your family has a low income of £16,190 or below, these charges may be removed if evidence is provided.

**I have been told that transport assistance will be provided for my child so how quickly will I be given details about this?**

A transport assessment is usually processed within 28 days and details of the decision will be provided to you as soon as possible. However, at particular busy times of the school year such as in July and August, there are high numbers of children being assessed for journeys to their new schools, academies and colleges. If there are high numbers of children attending the same school or academy, then available journey spaces will need to be identified. You will then be given details about the transport provider and the estimated times that your child will be collected from a named point near your home address.

You will be given details as soon as possible by email or a letter which confirms who will be your child's transport provider. You will be given details about which boarding point your child will be collected and returned to and the estimated times. The times and routes may sometimes have to change and you will usually be informed as soon as possible if changes are significant.

**If my child does not qualify for transport assistance do I have the right of appeal?**

Yes. Once you have a confirmed written decision from the Council you have 20 working days to request an appeal. You can request an appeal form by emailing: [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk) Further details about the appeals procedure is given in the Council's home to school transport policy. Appeals are usually considered within 20 working days.

**If I have a concern about my child's driver or a passenger assistant who do I contact?**

You need to contact the Council's Passenger Services Team based at Hellaby Depot. You can use our online forms or send an urgent email to [R&E-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:R&E-PassengerTransport@rotherham.gov.uk) or a text message on **07860 018829** and an available officer will contact you as soon as possible.

**What sort of concerns would I need to tell the Council about?**

You should inform the Council immediately if you do not recognise a driver, or a passenger assistant, and they do not show you their identity badge or refuse to give their name to you before your child joins the vehicle.

You should also contact the Council immediately if the vehicle has an obvious defect, for example a broken window, or your child is provided with a different vehicle that does not have suitable access for them.

**My child needs to leave school at lunchtime because they have a medical appointment so can the Council send them a taxi?**

No. For children who need to attend medical appointments, for example, dentist or

hospital, you will need to make your own arrangements to collect your child from school/college and return them back where necessary.

**I am attending a review meeting about my child at school so can I join them on their journey?**

No. If you are attending a school review, assembly or any other activity, you will need to make your own travel arrangements. Sometimes it may be that you have to travel at the same time as your child, so you will need to cancel the Council's transport for that morning or afternoon.

**I only want to use transport for the mornings but will collect them myself in the afternoons. Can I do this?**

Yes. Many families have different priorities and they may have other children they need to collect from other schools. You will need to contact the passenger services team at: [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk) with your query. You may be allocated a personal transport budget as a more suitable option.

**Will the transport driver come to my door to collect my child from my house?**

No. You must have a responsible person to supervise your child to and from the vehicle each day. The driver is responsible for your child during their journey and is responsible for their hand over to school staff. The driver is responsible for your child's handover to a responsible person at the end of their journey.

**Why do some children have a passenger assistant and others don't?**

Children with transport care plans who need supervision with their medical or mobility needs during their journey will have a passenger assistant on the vehicle who has received additional training.

**What if my child has an injury or an illness?**

If your child has an injury, such as a broken ankle, or has ill health, such as gastric flu or chicken pox, you must inform the passenger services team. We have to ensure your child is fit to travel. If your child is due to have an operation it may mean their usual vehicle will not be suitable so different arrangements may have to be made.

**I need to cancel my child's transport so who do I contact?**

Please contact the Passenger Services Team (and not your child's driver) if you need to cancel. You can do this by using one of our online forms, text service on **07860 018829** or use our 24 hours voicemail service on **01709 334325**.

We do need to know if your child is not travelling as this is part of our safeguarding duties. We also need to know when you want your child to go back onto transport.

Please do not inform the driver as it is not their responsibility to pass on messages to schools or to the Council. You should always inform your child's school if they will be absent or have ill health but it is your responsibility to let us know about transport that will not be needed for your child.

### **General Enquiries**

If you have a general enquiry about transport assessments and applications, please use our generic mailbox of [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk)