

Special Needs Home to School Transport



Guidelines for Contractors

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These guidelines are for contractors providing home to school transport for young people needing special arrangements. It lists what is expected from you over and above any statutory requirements.

Derbyshire County Council believes whenever possible young people should be encouraged to develop independent travel habits using public transport. But the nature of placements in schools and centres means that arrangements have to be flexible. To achieve this the authority works in partnership with transport providers, parents and carers, schools and young people to provide a quality service.

The county council provides more than 300,000 taxi and

minibus journeys each year for young people who have special educational needs.

These are monitored and reviewed regularly. Most of the time things run smoothly, but when problems occur Derbyshire County Council will deal with and resolve issues as quickly as possible.

We try to avoid constant changes of operator but we have to maintain high, cost-effective standards of service and are required to tender



every five years. Any contractor who regularly fails to meet the terms of its contract may find its services terminated.

Please read these guidelines to help deliver a quality service to young people needing special school transport arrangements.

Vehicles:

- use only fully-licensed vehicles and drivers and ensure that you comply with all relevant UK and EEC legislation.
- make sure that all vehicles are operated to a high standard of cleanliness.
- covers may be provided on request as Derbyshire County Council will not be held responsible for soiling of seats or other damage to vehicles.
- Derbyshire County Council operates a no-smoking policy which includes not smoking in the vehicle up to 10 minutes before the start of the home to school journey. Nor is it allowed to smoke on school premises, including car parks and waiting areas.
- an alternative vehicle of appropriate specification should be provided if the original breaks down or is not available.



Drivers/escorts:

- it is important for young people to have consistency and for parents or carers to feel secure so try to avoid frequent changes of drivers and escorts.
- the Local Education Authority (LEA) reserves the right to meet and check the suitability of drivers and escorts before awarding the contract.
- it is your responsibility to ensure all drivers and escorts complete a Disclosure Application Form giving consent to a police records check for criminal convictions.
- must carry some form of identification. Private Hire and Hackney Carriage drivers should wear their driver's badge so it is easily seen.
- should be suitably trained and able to maintain absolute discretion and confidentiality in relation to individuals' needs and circumstances.
- are not responsible for lifting young people into or out of vehicles. On request, schools will give advice about helping passengers transfer in and out of vehicles.

The journey:

- ensure you liaise closely with school and centre staff, parents and carers to provide adequate and appropriate passenger care.
- parents and carers should be given an emergency telephone number. All vehicles operated on contract should carry a mobile telephone.
- contractors, drivers and escorts may be asked to meet up with parents/carers before journeys are provided.
- the recommended maximum travelling time – 45 minutes for primary school pupils, 75 minutes for secondary and above – should not be exceeded. The exception is for children travelling to some special schools further afield.
- if a child is not at home when you call to collect them, it is important that this is reported to the school or council's transport office.
- a written report should be submitted to the county council if there is any incident or accident affecting passengers
- never leave passengers unattended in vehicles.
- only carry passengers contracted to travel on that journey.
- only make journeys specified in the contract unless they have been previously approved by Derbyshire County Council.

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Further information:

We hope you find these guidelines useful but if you have any queries or need more information about special needs school transport please contact **Call Derbyshire 08 456 058 058** (8.00am–8.00pm weekdays, 9.30am– 4.00pm Saturdays).

Or you can write to:

**Special Needs Transport
Environmental Services Department
Derbyshire County Council
County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG**

Email: public.transport@derbyshire.gov.uk

Guidelines are also provided to drivers and escorts, parents and carers and schools. If you would like copies of these leaflets please contact **Call Derbyshire 08 456 058 058.**

If you have difficulty reading these guidelines they can be made available in other formats. Please contact Call Derbyshire 08 456 058 058 for more information.