

All Things Travel

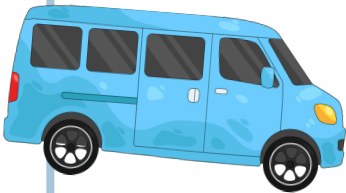
Parent Carer Guide to SEND Travel



Home to School Transport

For many children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), getting to and from school safely can be a significant challenge. Difficulties with communication, mobility, sensory processing, anxiety, medical needs, or understanding danger can all make independent travel difficult or impossible.

Local authorities have a legal duty to consider providing free home to school transport for eligible children. However, the rules can sometimes feel confusing, and many parent carers are unaware that support may be available.



Who Might Be Eligible?

A child may qualify for home to school transport if they:

- Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and their needs mean they cannot reasonably walk to school.
- Have a disability or medical condition that makes travelling difficult.
- Have significant anxiety or mental health difficulties that impact their ability to travel safely.
- Attend a school named in their EHCP that is further away than the usual walking distance.
- Cannot safely access school without specialist transport or support.

Each local authority has its own transport policy, but SEND needs should always be taken into account when decisions are made.



What Support Could Be Available?

Depending on your child's needs, transport support may include:

- A taxi or minibus service.
- A passenger assistant or escort.
- Mileage payments for parents who transport their child.
- A personal transport budget.
- Travel training for older children and young people where appropriate.

Support should be based on your child's individual needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

If Your Child Has an EHCP

Transport is not automatically included just because a child has an EHCP.

However, if transport is necessary for your child to access the school named in their EHCP, this should be considered by the local authority.

It can be helpful to ensure that evidence of transport difficulties, anxiety, mobility needs, sensory challenges, or safety concerns is clearly documented within the EHCP.

When Transport Doesn't Go Smoothly

Many parent carers tell us that transport can become a source of stress.

You may experience:

- Changes to drivers or escorts.
- Long journey times.
- Delays or cancellations.
- Difficulty communicating concerns.
- Anxiety or distress from your child about travelling.
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If transport arrangements are affecting your child's wellbeing or attendance, keep a record of what is happening and raise concerns with the transport team as soon as possible.

If Your Application Is Refused

You have the right to challenge a transport decision.

You can:

- Ask for the reasons for the decision in writing.
- Request a review.
- Follow the local authority's transport appeals process.
- Seek advice from SEND support organisations or parent carer forums.

Many successful appeals are supported by evidence showing how a child's SEND impacts their ability to travel safely or independently.

Helpful Tips

- ✓ Keep copies of all correspondence.
- ✓ Gather evidence from professionals who know your child well.
- ✓ Focus on your child's needs rather than the diagnosis alone.
- ✓ Explain what would happen if your child attempted the journey without support.
- ✓ Remember that anxiety, sensory needs, communication difficulties and safety awareness are all valid factors to consider.

Remember: Home to school transport is not simply about distance. For many children with SEND, the question is whether they can access education safely and consistently without additional support. If travelling to school creates significant barriers, it is worth exploring what help may be available.



Independent Travel Training

We know that travelling independently may be a big step for your child, and you!

However, the trainers will work with young people on a 1-2-1 or small group basis within school/college ensuring they feel confident and comfortable. Training includes personal safety, road safety and journey planning. Trainers will complete a number of real-life routes which will be phased out over time as and when the individual is ready.

How it works

- A travel trainer takes people on practical journeys
- The trainer highlights road safety, personal safety, and what to do if lost or anxious
- The training is gradual and ends with unaccompanied journeys
- The training is flexible and person-centered

Benefits

- Helps people travel to school, work, and leisure venues
- Improves self-esteem and confidence
- Helps people be less reliant on parents and carers
- Helps people take part in social and community activities
- Helps people widen their social and educational activities
- Helps people maintain better relationships with their peers
- Helps people open up employment opportunities

Who it's for

- People who need extra assistance and support to make journeys safely on their own
- People with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
- Disabled people
- Children and young people

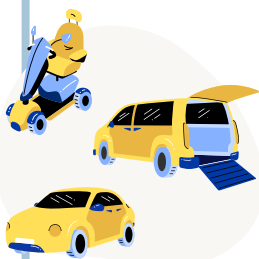
How the Motability Scheme works

Exchange your qualifying mobility allowance, awarded with DLA (Disability Living Allowance) for a brand-new car or Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) depending on your families needs.



Which type of vehicle suits my family best?

Different vehicles suit different people, so we'll help you decide between our vehicle types and any adaptations. We'll help you make sure you're making the right choice for your needs.



How do I apply and order?

You can start applying online if it's a car or a WAV. Once you've found a vehicle you like, and had a test drive, visit a Motability Scheme dealer and they'll order it for you. Most dealerships will have a specific person on site to help you with this.



How do I pay?

We'll receive your payments straight from your allowance provider, to make paying simple.



Blue Badge is a parking permit that allows people with disabilities or health conditions to park closer to their destination. Enabling those with significant mobility impairments to park more conveniently or those who may have little knowledge of safety, reducing the distance they need to travel.

Eligibility for a child:

- Receiving the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Receiving Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Being registered blind (severely sight impaired)
- Hidden disabilities
- Having a disability that can cause mobility problems
- Caring for a child with a health condition



Walking Difficulties:

- The child must have a physical disability that causes very considerable difficulty in walking, or they are unable to walk at all.
- a person who may be at risk of serious harm when walking – or pose, when walking

Difficulties not always visible:

- a risk of serious harm to any other person due to non-visible disabilities,
- behaviours or lack of situational awareness which present safety risks for the disabled person or others.

Medical Conditions:

- The child may qualify if they have a medical condition that means they must always be kept near a vehicle in case they need emergency medical treatment, or if they must be accompanied by bulky medical equipment.

Under 3 Years Old:

- If the child is under 3, they may qualify if they have a medical condition that requires them to be kept near a vehicle for emergency medical treatment.



What you can do with a Blue Badge

- Park in designated disabled parking bays
- Park free of charge at on-street parking meters and in Pay and Display bays
- Park on single or double yellow lines for up to 3 hours

Using your Blue Badge

- You can **only** use your child's badge when you're driving them, they are a passenger in a car, or someone is picking them up or dropping them off.
- The driver must follow the rules of the road, which are set out in the Highway Code.

Helpful Tips

- ✓ Focus on how your child's needs affect journeys and safety.
- ✓ Use real-life examples rather than just diagnoses.
- ✓ Explain the support your child needs when travelling.
- ✓ Include evidence from professionals wherever possible.
- ✓ Remember that hidden disabilities can be just as significant as physical disabilities.

Remember: A Blue Badge is not awarded because of a diagnosis. It is awarded because of the impact a disability has on a person's ability to access their community safely and independently. For many children with SEND, having a Blue Badge can reduce stress, improve safety and make everyday life a little more manageable.

How to Apply:

Apply Online:

You can apply for a Blue Badge online through [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Choose "Someone Else" Application:

When applying, select the option that you are applying "on behalf of someone else".

Gather Required Information:

You'll need to provide information about the child's condition, including details about their walking ability or medical needs.

Upload Supporting Documents:

You may need to upload documents such as proof of identity, proof of address, and any relevant medical evidence.

If for any circumstance your child may not meet the eligible criteria, you could be referred to an expert assessor, or occupational therapist for further consideration.

Pay for the Badge:

Once your application is approved, you will need to pay for the Blue Badge, which costs £10.

Processing Time:

it can take up TO 12 weeks for them to let you know the decision.



For more information on blue badges, check out citizens advice website, who provide more information on the process.

Use the QR code to acces

We know that travelling with a child with additional needs can be difficult but there is lots of support available. We have put together a guide of what is available to help.

Top Tips for Travelling -

Make sure to prepare and plan ahead!

Ensure you have communicated your child's needs in advance

- This could be phoning the hotel or airline to let them know of any specialist requirements your child may need. This will include letting them know of any equipment you need to take with you, access requirements for the room, if you need any letters for any medication you are taking with you and any other requirements your child may have.



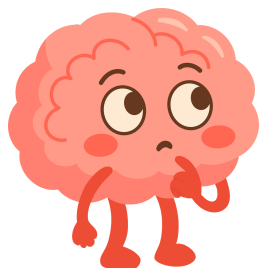
Check out the accessibility of the area -

It is a good idea to check out the area you are going to see if it meets your child's accessibility needs. You could check -

Do they have a changing space?

Do the venues you are going to have ramps, etc?

Is the transport in that area accessible, i.e. are there lifts to platforms, etc?



There are websites that can help you to check accessibility of a destination before you go.

Use the QR code to check out
AccessAble



Make sure to pack any aids and comfort items!

When travelling, we know that being away can be really difficult. A different environment can be a challenge for children with

additional needs. Any aids that your child needs or even comfort items that might help them to adjust can make travelling a little bit easier!

This can be noise cancelling headphones, fidget toys, specialist mobility aids such as a specialist buggy, and anything else that your child might need in order for you all to relax and enjoy your holiday!



Have a plan for the unexpected!

We know that sometimes things don't always go exactly how we planned them! So it can be a good idea to have a back up plan.



- Delays – have you thought about how your child will cope with any delays? Is there anything you can put in place for if this happens?
- Can you begin to prepare them before the holiday through the use of social stories, timetables, etc?

One last tip!

Ensure when taking out travel insurance that you communicate all of your child's diagnoses or needs to the insurance company. If they are unaware of any diagnosis, including autism or ADHD, this can invalidate your travel insurance and may leave you stuck if you need to claim.

Help available when flying



Airports are busy environments and we know that this can make going on holiday a stressful experience. Airports now offer different options to ensure the experience is more inclusive and accessible for those with SEND.

Some airports now offer:

- Private security checks by same-sex staff to make the process less overwhelming
- A medical carrier for medical supplies when travelling
- Assistance when it comes to boarding the aircraft. If you require any support, please speak to your airline to book Passenger Assistance
- Quiet areas
- Changing Places
- Visits so your child can familiarise themselves with the environment before travelling

You can contact airports directly to check what facilities they do have and how you can access them.

Help available when travelling by train

Train lines have the Passenger Assist service, where you can contact them in advance of your journey. You can also get a disabled persons railcard which enables you to get discounted travel.

They can assist with:

- Securing a wheelchair designated spot along with organising seating alongside it for those travelling.
- Letting staff know of any communication needs (i.e. are they non-speaking and use communication aids)
- Accessibility – whether this is getting on and off train or getting around the station



Help available when travelling by bus



Help is available by contacting the coach or bus company you are travelling with as they each have their own dedicated travel assistance teams.

They can help with:

- Wheelchair spaces and ramp or lift access to the coach for boarding
- Staff assistance – having someone available to assist with boarding and who can be there if further help is needed
- Communicating with the driver if they need to be aware of any medical needs

There is also a disabled coachcard that will enable you to access a discounted rate of travel.

Travel Equipment

There is equipment available to support you when travelling with your SEND child.

Specialist buggys – For children with mobility limitations, offering postural support, adjustable features, and different wheel types for various terrains.

Travel Chairs – Unique chairs designed to fit into standard airline seats, providing postural support for disabled children during air travel.

Harnesses/Reins for Walking – These are designed to keep children safe when around busy roads or environments.

See our '**Navigating SEND**' directory for more types of travel equipment!

Concessions

What are carer concessions and how do you get them?

Some local carer services have discount cards for carers registered with them that so they can get money off at local businesses. Multiple locations across the country offer different reduced rates, concessions, and passes to families who have individuals with additional needs.

We advise before your trip, check the locations website, and read their concession rates usually within the ticket info area. Some sites also offer access to sensory rooms, quiet spaces, and options to queue jump, so it is always worth contacting them before your visit.



Max Cards are provided by Local Authorities and selected charities across the UK.



Families can use their Max Card at venues across the UK to get free or discounted admission. The scheme is designed to help families save money on great days out at castles, zoos, bowling alleys, trampoline parks and many more.

KIDSPASS

This membership offers discounts on various activities and days out, including cinemas, trampoline parks, and more.



Helpful Charities for Support and Funding



An international children's charity dedicated to creating magical experiences for children who need them most.



This organisation provides grants to low-income families raising disabled or seriously ill children for a variety of things, including family breaks.

Family Fund
Helping disabled children



Designed to streamline the process of communicating your access needs, the Access Card translates your disability or impairment into easy-to-understand symbols.



The 3H Foundation assists people with disabilities and their carers, who are on a low income, to enable them to organise a break for themselves in the UK.



Your Child, Your Choice

Because one size doesn't fit all

Find our
website here:

