



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

**Home to school/college travel assistance for
children, young people and post-16 students with
special educational needs, medical needs or a
disability**



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1. Introduction

This booklet explains Nottinghamshire County Council's arrangements for providing travel assistance for children/young people who have a special educational need (SEN), a medical need or a disability.

Many children/young people with a statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are able to walk to school or travel using public transport: however, some require more support. This booklet explains when travel assistance can be provided and the different types of travel assistance available.

A child/young person's eligibility to travel assistance will be determined by the Council's Transport and Travel Services (TTS).

We will ensure that children/young people's travel assistance requirements are assessed on an individual basis and that decisions are based on individual needs.

A child/young person's individual needs will determine the travel assistance they are given and evidence will be taken from a range of professionals.

The legal requirements relating to the general duty of a Local Authority to provide travel assistance from home to school are contained within Section 509 of the Education Act 1996. The duty to consider the provision of free or assisted travel applies equally to children/young people with or without SEN, medical needs and/or a disability.

General conditions and responsibilities

2. Children up to and including year 11

- 2.1 The child must be resident in the county of Nottinghamshire.
- 2.2 If possible, children with SEN, disabilities and/or a medical need should walk to school, travel on public transport or be taken by their parent/ carers. They should develop independent travel skills which should be assessed at each annual review. However, some children with SEN, disabilities and/or a medical need may require assistance with their travel to school.
- 2.3 We will consider providing travel assistance if a child:
- has a statement or an EHCP, and
 - is attending the school allocated by the County Council that meets their needs, or a nearer qualifying school, and
 - lives beyond the 'statutory walking distance' from his or her 'qualifying' or 'catchment' school as detailed below:

Distance Criteria

Ages	Statutory walking distance
Under 8 years of age (end of year 3)	Over 2 miles
8 – 11 years (end of year 6)	Over 3 miles
11 years +	Over 3 miles
Low income families ¹	
8 – 11 years (end of year 6)	2 – 3 miles
11 years +	2 – 6 miles ²

¹ 'Low income' families are those receiving free school meals or the maximum level of working tax credit.

² Distance for 6 miles is measured by the shortest vehicle route

- 2.4 Subject to the same mileage criteria above, we will also consider providing travel assistance if a child does not have a statement or EHCP, but their sensory, physical, medical or behavioural difficulties prevent them from getting to school, even when accompanied by a parent/carer. In these cases the travel assistance is assessed by TTS with supporting evidence from medical and other professionals as required.

We will consider providing travel assistance if a child:

- attends the qualifying/designated school, and
- lives within the walking distance (see 2.3), and
- is unable to walk/travel safely to school when accompanied by a parent/carer, and
- is unable to use public transport when accompanied by a parent/carer

- 2.5 Travel assistance may be provided for a pre-school age child who has an EHCP. In such cases, assistance may be provided to nursery schools, nursery classes or units and pre-school playgroups that are named in the EHCP.

- 2.6 There may be other exceptional circumstances in which travel assistance may be offered. TTS will consider any exceptional circumstances in individual cases.

- 2.7 Children who go to a preferred school (i.e. not their catchment school or the school allocated in their statement or EHCP) will not normally be entitled to travel assistance.

3. Post-16 students

- 3.1 In addition to the general conditions and responsibilities outlined in section 2, to be entitled to travel assistance a post-16 student must:
- be attending Education Funding Agency-funded provision, and
 - be attending full-time, non-advanced (i.e. up to and including level 3) education, and
 - be attending a minimum of 540 guided learning hours per year over at least 30 weeks in the academic year, and
 - be attending a school, college of Further Education, Independent Specialist Provider or learning provider that is funded by the local authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning, and
 - be
 - i. over compulsory school age (16) but under 19 years of age on 1 September 2017, or
 - ii. continuing to attend a course begun before the student was 19 until it is completed or until the end of the academic year in which the student reaches 25 years of age, whichever is sooner, or
 - iii. aged between 19 and 24 on 1 September 2017 and have undergone a statutory assessment of need, i.e. statement or EHCP, and
 - be unable to walk/travel safely to school when accompanied by a parent/carer, or unable to use public transport when accompanied by a parent/carer
- 3.2 The three mile distance criterion will be waived for post-16 students who are assessed as needing travel assistance.
- 3.3 Entitlement to travel assistance is assessed by TTS, with supporting evidence from medical and other professionals as required.

4. Travel assistance options

- 4.1 If travel assistance is approved, this will normally take the form of one of the following:
- Provision of a Direct Travel Assistance Payment (DTAP)
 - Parental mileage allowance
 - A free bus or train pass
 - Provision of special/medical transport

Provision of a Direct Travel Assistance Payment (DTAP)

- 4.2 A DTAP is available to families of children/young people who are determined by TTS as being eligible for travel assistance from the County Council.
- 4.3 A DTAP is a payment that is made to a parent/carer to enable them to make their own home to school/college travel arrangements.
- 4.4 There are a number of benefits from opting for a DTAP:
- Using the most appropriate arrangements to get a child to and from school/college to fit in with a parent/carer's personal circumstances.
 - More freedom to look at other ways of transporting a child.
 - An alternative to the traditional services that the council can provide.
 - Choice and control over how funding is used to get a child to and from school/college.
 - The opportunity to explore options to share with other parents and potentially increase how much can be done with the DTAP.
 - Flexibility on where a child is picked up and variation with times, e.g. to attend an after-school club or to go to a grandparent or other carer after school/college.
 - To enable a child to attend outside appointments such as dentist/doctor and still get their transport to/from school/college.

- 4.5 There are a number of ways you can use a DTAP, for example:
- Mileage payments to parent/carers to support transporting a child/young person, based on two return journeys each day to and from school, which may be via a taxi or family car.
 - To employ a travel escort to support a child/young person's journey to school, based on two return journeys each day to and from school.
 - To purchase a travel pass for a child/young person to access public transport to get to school.
 - To car share with other parents where their children are attending the same school, based on two return journeys each day to and from school and awarded as mileage payments.
- 4.6 The amount of money a parent/carer would receive for mileage would be based on the distance between the family home and the child/young person's school/college and would be paid at 45p a mile. The gross payment for an escort would be £9 per hour. Each DTAP would be tailored to the specific needs of a family.
- 4.7 Payments will be made into your designated bank account in three equal instalments at the start of each term.
- 4.8 DTAPs are voluntary and if you find that you can't keep up the commitment, you will be able to leave the scheme at the end of term. You will need to give notice of at least four weeks. This will allow sufficient time for alternative travel arrangements to be made by the Council. If you find you are having difficulties with your travel arrangements, we may be able to help you by providing advice or adjusting the amount of your DTAP if your circumstances have changed.
- 4.9 The Council could cancel your DTAP if:
- Your child's attendance is unacceptable and/or they are late for school.
 - You move home and your child is no longer eligible for home to school travel support.
 - You have not made safe travel arrangements for your child.
 - Your child leaves the school.

- 4.10 For further information about a DTAP please contact the Integrated Children's Disability Service Commissioning Team on 0115 804 2677. Email icds.commissioningteam@nottsc.gov.uk

Parental mileage allowance

- 4.11 Where it is the most efficient and cost-effective way of providing travel assistance for eligible children, parents who wish to do so can apply for a mileage allowance to transport their child to and from school/college themselves. The mileage rate is paid at 22.6p a mile for two return journeys between the family home and school at the start and end of the standard school day.

Free bus or train pass

- 4.12 A free bus or train pass enables a child/young person to travel on specific transport services for one journey to and from school/college each day.

Provision of special/medical transport

- 4.13 Where special or medical transport is provided, this will normally be to and from a designated pick-up/drop-off point located within one mile of the home address:
- Parent/carers are responsible for escorting a child/young person to and from the designated pick-up/drop-off point.
 - Staff at the school/college are responsible for escorting the child/young person once they are off the vehicle.
 - Where a parent/carer does not receive the child/young person when they get home from school/college, the child/young person will be taken to a place of safety.
 - Where a parent/carer consistently fails to escort the child/young person to and from the pick-up/drop-off point at the agreed times, the transport will be reviewed and may be withdrawn.
- 4.14 A pick-up and/or drop-off at home will only be provided in exceptional circumstances; supporting evidence from medical and other professionals may be required to support the request.

- 4.15 Transport is normally provided in the form of a shared vehicle. Individual transport will only be provided in exceptional circumstances; supporting evidence from medical and other professionals may be required to support the request.
- 4.16 TTS will take account of advice received from educational and medical professionals to determine whether a child's health or behavioural needs mean it is necessary to provide an escort and/or other facilities.
- 4.17 Change can be a challenge for children/young people with SEN and their families. TTS try to minimise changes to transport arrangements but they do have to be reviewed from time to time as children/young people start and leave school/college. It is also necessary to re-tender contracts from time to time to ensure the best price is obtained.
- 4.18 TTS do try to give notice to parent/carers if a child/young person's transport is going to change. Unfortunately there are occasions when transport has to be changed at very short notice, for example if a driver or escort are ill or the vehicle breaks down. Every effort will be made to inform parent/carers if this happens.

Residential Special Schools

- 4.19 Where the County Council has placed a child/young person in a residential special school over the statutory walking distance, parent/carers may be reimbursed at 22.6p a mile to transport their children to and from the school at mid and full-term holidays, or as determined by the child/young person's EHCP. Weekly boarders will be provided with travel assistance at the beginning and end of each school week. Where parent/carers do not have access to transport, or where it is more cost effective, transport will be provided by the County Council.
- 4.20 Where children/young people attend a residential special school on a 52 week placement, transport is not provided. If assistance with transport is required, the social care worker allocated to the family should be contacted.

Respite Care/Short Breaks

- 4.21 This is not covered by the Home to School or Post-16 Transport Policies. Transport requests should be made to Children's Social Care and Health.

5. Changes of circumstances

- 5.1 If your family circumstances change, for example if you move house, the Council will need to decide if the change has any effect on the educational placement and transport entitlement. If your family circumstances change, please contact the Integrated Children's Disability Service Commissioning Team on 0115 804 2677 or email icds.commissioningteam@nottsc.gov.uk.

6. What's not provided

- 6.1 Travel assistance will only be provided at the beginning and end of the normal school/college day. Travel assistance will not be provided:
- a) To access breakfast or after-school clubs including out of school/college activities
 - b) To and from work experience, taster or open days, or transition visits
 - c) To and from provision off-site organised by the school/college
 - d) For transfers between educational establishments during the school day
 - e) To and from temporary addresses including other family members, friends and child minders where these arrangements are made by the family
 - f) To and from medical appointments
 - g) To and from annual reviews
 - h) Following detention
 - i) At times to suit the convenience of family arrangements
 - j) At times when other siblings in the family have to be taken to other schools
 - k) For late arrival or early departure, for example due to illness or medical appointments
 - l) For shorter than normal days e.g. during the exam season

- m) For a child whose level of attendance is a cause of concern, but for whom no eligibility criteria are met
- n) For students on exchange visits
- o) Where the behaviour of a young person is not acceptable to the driver of the vehicle and places other travellers at risk.

In any of the above circumstances, parents/carers will have to make alternative arrangements.

7. Independent Travel Training

- 7.1 Independent Travel Training (ITT) is training for people who are currently unable, or restricted in their ability, to travel unassisted on public transport because of learning difficulties or physical disabilities.

The aim of ITT is for people to gain total travel independence, following positive safe travel practice with the assistance of an adult

- 7.2 The objectives are:

- gain an understanding of safe practice, leading to a reduction of road accidents
- gain increased self-esteem
- have an enhanced quality of social life
- have raised aspirations for job prospects.

- 7.3 On completion of the programme, participants should be able to travel independently to local and more widespread destinations, including school/college, and back home.

Find out more at:

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/transport/community-accessible-transport/independent-travel-training>

or by contacting the Independent Travel Training team:

- telephone: 0300 500 80 80
- email: itt@nottsc.gov.uk

8. Queries about eligibility and applications

- 8.1 Further information about eligibility for travel assistance is available at the following website:

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/travel-to-schools/special-transport-needs>

This includes a link to download the application form to make an application.

Alternatively, please ring on 0300 500 80 80 or email ntsclientengagement@nottsc.gov.uk

9. Review of travel assistance decisions

- 9.1 A parent/carer has the right to a review of a decision if they believe their child's entitlement to travel assistance has been assessed incorrectly or they are unhappy with the assistance provided.

Stage one: officer review

- 9.2 The request for review should be set out in a letter or email. This will be considered by an officer in TTS who is independent from the original decision process.

When a decision has been reached, the parent/carer will be sent a detailed written notification of the outcome of the review. This will explain the rationale for the decision reached and explain how, if they wish to do so, the parent /carer can request their case be taken to stage two of the appeal process.

Stage two: Transport Appeal Panel review

- 9.3 A parent/carer has 20 working days from receipt of the stage one written decision notification to make a written request for their case to be taken to stage two of the review process.

The Transport Review Panel members are independent of the original decision making process to ensure a balance is achieved between meeting the needs of the parent/carer, the child/young person and the County Council.

- 9.4 If a stage two appeal is unsuccessful there is no further right of appeal within Nottinghamshire County Council. However if a parent/ carer is dissatisfied with the way the appeal has been conducted they may complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Local Government Ombudsman has no statutory power to overturn the decision of the Panel but can draw the County Council's attention to any misadministration leading to injustice.
- 9.5 Should a review find in the parents/carers' favour, free travel will be backdated to when the original application was received by TTS or the start of the academic year in which the application was made, whichever is the later.



Notes



traveline
public transport info
www.traveline.info

0871 200 22 33
calls cost 12p per minute
plus your phone company's access charge



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