

Parent Guide to Travel Assistance

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

This guide, co-produced by Family Voice Surrey and Surrey County Council, is for you as a parent or carer whose child may be eligible for home to school transport under the Council's travel assistance policy.

Here you will find essential information about the home to school travel service, what you should expect from us and how you can help us in your application for travel assistance, to enable your child to have a successful journey.

The full policy is available on the council's website:

UNDER 16 - www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport/under-16/home-to-school-travel-assistance-policy-under-16

AGES 16-25 - www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport/16-plus/travel-assistance-policy-for-post-16

A more comprehensive user guide is also available on the Council's website - www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport



Page of Contents

- 1** What is home to school transport?
- 2** Is my child eligible for home to school transport?
- 3** How to apply?
- 4** When to apply?
- 5** When to reapply?
- 6** When will we hear back?
- 7** What type of travel assistance is provided?
- 8** Is a passenger assistant provided?
- 9** Other educational placements
- 10** Journey times
- 11** Independent Travel Training (ITT)
- 12** What you can expect from the Local Authority
- 13** Top tips to make home to school transport a success
- 14** Safeguarding and reporting an onboard incident
- 15** The appeal process
- 16** How to contact us
- 17** Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is home to school transport?



Each year, the Council arranges travel assistance for more than 11,000 eligible children who attend more than 500 education settings via its Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team (SSTAT).

In any academic year the number of journeys on coaches, buses, minibuses, cars and taxis, with parents, on bicycle or walking, account for more than 1.7 million journeys.



Most children make their own way to school either accompanied by their parents, or independently if they are older.

For some children with additional needs and disabilities this may not be possible, either because their school is too far away, or because they are not able to walk or use public transport in the same way as other children. These children may be eligible for home to school transport which local authorities must provide, in line with statutory guidance.

Is my child eligible for home to school transport?

Your child will be eligible for home to school travel assistance if they have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), attend the nearest suitable school to their home address and live:

- ✓ 2 miles or more from that school if the child is under the age of 8 and of statutory school age.
- ✓ 3 miles or more from the age of 8 and upwards (Year 4 onwards).

The Council may also provide home to school travel assistance to children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in the following exceptional circumstances:

- ➔ Where a young person is unable to walk the required distance due to their SEN or mobility needs, even when accompanied by a suitable adult. In these cases, applicants may be required to submit independent professional evidence to support their request.
- ➔ Low-income policy - Your child may be able to get free home to school travel assistance if your family has a low income.

Please note that there is no automatic entitlement to travel assistance just because a young person has a Special Educational Need or Disability, even where an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) has been issued.

For more detail on the eligibility criteria for home to school travel assistance, please refer to the Council's website - www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport/under-16/apply

NB: A parent/carer can express a preference for a specific education setting to be named on their EHCP. Alongside this, a SEND team may identify another education setting that can meet the child or young person's needs, can offer a place, and is closer to their home. This would be shown in Section I of the EHCP and, if the child is eligible, the council would be responsible for arranging and paying for transport. The family's choice would be named as a 'parental preference' and the parent/carer would be responsible for arranging and paying for transport to that setting. Both education settings must be named in section I in this instance.

How to apply?

Selecting the correct application form

Applications are completed and submitted online. You must submit a separate application for travel assistance for each child.

There is a separate form for children under 16 years and for 16–25 year olds:

- www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport/under-16/apply
- www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport/16-plus/travel-assistance-to-school-or-college-for-students-aged-16-25

If you require a paper version, or need assistance please call 0300 200 1004.

Additional information

When you apply, particularly if you are applying based on extenuating circumstances (such as family ill health, bereavement, and low income etc), please attach supporting evidence to your application. This will help to identify your child's individual needs as part of the assessment. Please ensure you have this available in an electronic format before proceeding with your application.

You will be prompted within the application process to attach evidence where necessary. Evidence may be in the form of, but is not limited to:

- Report or supporting statement from relevant medical professionals involved with the child/parent (e.g. GP/Physio/Occupational therapy)
- Report or supporting statement from relevant professionals involved with the child/family (e.g. the child's school/social worker/case officer/educational psychologist)
- Evidence of low income (e.g. confirmation from the school of Free School Meals, last 3 months of Universal Credit statements, etc.)
- Evidence relating to an unforeseen house move.

When to apply?

For September starts

Apply for school transport **as soon as your child's school place has been confirmed** and you have a copy of their EHCP with a named educational setting in section I.

We require a copy of your child's EHCP in order to assess eligibility for travel assistance. If we receive an application and there isn't an EHCP in place, we will contact colleagues in SEND to establish the EHCP issue status, or we may refuse the application.

Guidance on travel assistance is included in the key stage transfer letter which accompanies your final Education, Health and Care Plan, provided by your area SEND Team. We normally recommend that an application is submitted within 2 weeks of a letter with a named placement being issued.

For applications outside of a September start

You should apply for travel assistance if you believe you are eligible, as soon as possible. For SEND pupils applying for an EHCP, as soon as it is finalised and the school place has been confirmed. We will aim to assess your application within 20 working days.

For successful applications, the Council will then put appropriate travel arrangements in place and you will be notified within 10 working days.

If successful, you will be notified of the travel arrangements once they are in place. Should your application be turned down, you will be given the reasons why and how to appeal any decision.

If an application is submitted after 31 July

Applications received later than 31 July can result in difficulty ensuring travel arrangements are in place for the start of September if your child is eligible.

If you apply after the 31 July, and your child is eligible for assistance, we will offer an interim Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) to you and we will look to organise transport arrangements once the September term has started.

While the Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team (SSTAT) makes every effort to plan and organise travel arrangements, if we are unable to secure appropriate travel provision in time, then the Council will assign you an interim Independent Travel Allowance in the first instance.

How are travel arrangements communicated?

Once travel assistance has been allocated by the Council, there is a two-step process before your child's arrangements start:

- ✔ You will receive an email with a notification to access a letter detailing your transport provider. The notification from gov.uk will include a link to a letter which details the transport company.
- ✔ The transport provider will contact you in advance to confirm the start date, pick-up and drop-off time, as well as any specific needs of your child.

Assessment of travel assistance for children aged under 5

The continued aim is that the Council, in-line with its travel assistance policy, applies a robust approach to the consideration of travel assistance for children aged 4 who will be entering the reception year in September.

The Council expects that children under the age of 5 will be taken to their educational provision by a parent or guardian. However, Surrey County Council may use its discretionary powers to provide Travel Assistance for children who are aged 4 and entering the reception year at primary school if extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated.

The Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team (SSTAT) met with colleagues from Commissioning, Early Years, Additional Needs and Disabilities and Family Voice Surrey (FVS), to discuss the impact on families of the decision to apply a more robust approach this year. The result was an agreement to consider a more flexible response to individual circumstances, particularly in instances where without a travel solution in-place, an agreed school placement may break down.

Guidance on how the Authority considers travel assistance applications for children aged under 5 is available here:

www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/parents-and-carers/education-and-training/travel-assistance#Under5

Parameters Document

For children aged 4 starting their reception year in September 2024, a new parameters document has been developed. The parameters will be applied to travel assistance assessments where a stage one or stage two appeal has been submitted.

The parameters document will be an internal document and will include a broader look at what the Local Authority would normally consider an exceptional circumstance when an appeal is submitted. This will include where there's risk of potential placement breakdown without a travel solution in place, with insights and understanding provided by Commissioning and Early Years where appropriate.

September 2025 (Key Stage Transfer)

It is important that, in preparation for those children starting in the reception year in September 2025 who will be 4 years old, families are provided with key messaging regarding travel guidance as early as possible. Notably, during the EHC assessment and placement decision-making process, which should include discussion around how parents and carers see their children getting to their school placements, and guidance on requesting travel assistance that includes the period that their child is under 5 years of age.

For information regarding the Council's approach to travel assistance, including for children aged under 5, please visit:

www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/parents-and-carers/education-and-training/travel-assistance#Under5

When to reapply?

→ For under 16s:

- End of key stage (in some cases we may automatically extend travel assistance to the next key stage). We will normally write to you during the spring term to confirm if we do this.
- If your child changes school
- If you move address - customer.surreycc.gov.uk/travel-assistance-change-of-address



→ For over 16s



Local authorities do not have a statutory duty to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support.

The council specifies the arrangements it sees as necessary to facilitate young people over 16 receiving education or training. It considers how to support young people's independence and preparation for adulthood, and where appropriate, employment. More details are available

Guidance on travel assistance is included in the key stage transfer letter which accompanies your final Education, Health and Care Plan.

When will we hear back?

In-year travel requests (outside of September)

The Council will aim to notify you of the outcome of your application and, if successful, the details of the travel arrangements within 6 weeks of the date of submission. This includes 20 days to assess the application and a further 10 days to arrange travel arrangements.

It may take longer to put arrangements in place if there is a need for a specialist vehicle and/or support.

September travel requests

We will aim to assess your application within 20 working days of receiving it.

During the summer term and into the summer holiday, the Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team undertakes a review of all travel assistance arrangements. It involves the review of travel assistance into every school and education setting in Surrey.

For families who apply before 31 July, we will aim to ensure that you will receive notification of the specific transport provision at least 7 days before the start of term in September. If, for any reason, there is a delay with confirming travel arrangements we will contact you as early as possible.

If an application is submitted after 31 July

Applications received later than 31 July can result in difficulty ensuring travel arrangements are in place for the start of September if your child is eligible. While the SSTAT makes every effort to plan and organise travel arrangements, if we are unable to secure appropriate travel provision then the Council will assign you an interim Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) in the first instance.

February – October are normally the Service’s peak times for applications, however we receive applications all year round.

Summer review of travel arrangements

The Summer Review entails reviewing around 1,400 existing routes and incorporating new requests for travel assistance that have been submitted. The aim of the review is to ensure that we remain as cost-effective as possible while maintaining appropriate travel arrangements for our children and young people.

Changes to travel arrangements for existing users, or those newly notified following a successful application:

For existing passengers who access their education settings via contracted transport (private hire vehicle such as a taxi or minibus), wherever possible, transport will be the same or similar. There will be occasions where we will need to change a service, or where notified arrangements may change. Reasons why we are required to change a service, and what could change include:

- More children and young people being awarded transport to a specific education setting and are added to a specific vehicle/route.
- The operator of a current route changes.
- The type of vehicle.
- A journey time is increased owing to more children in a vehicle.
- The home pick-up and drop-off times.
- Outcomes following an appeal.

What information will I receive once Travel Assistance is allocated?

Once travel assistance has been allocated by the Council, there is a two-step process before your child's arrangements start.

1 - You will receive an email with a notification to access a letter detailing your transport provider. The notification from gov.uk will include a link to a letter which details the transport company.

2 - The transport provider will contact you in advance to confirm the start date and pick-up and drop-off time as well as any specific needs of your child.

In many cases approved transport suppliers can offer parents and carers a "Meet and Greet" service, to enable the pupil to see the transport being provided and meet their new transport team.

In some circumstances however this may not be possible, particularly if the Council needs to add a child or young person to an existing route that may change the setup of the arrangements, or if the start date of transport arrangements doesn't allow for this to take place.

What information would be helpful to share about my child?

When you applied you would have been asked what would help support your child or young person on the journey. Please aim to provide details of your child's relevant likes, dislikes and needs on transport with the Council. For example, your child may have a one-page profile document.

If you agree, this information can be shared with the transport provider. This will help the driver and any passenger assistants to understand the needs of your child and young person and make the journey comfortable.

Please note that the Council does not share your child's EHCP with transport operators, and will only share relevant information with the approval of parent carers via the formal application process.

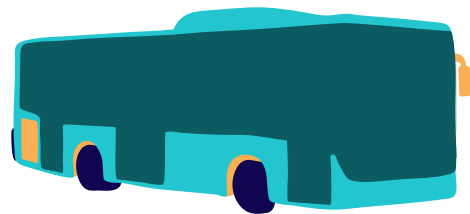
What type of travel assistance is provided?

The Council's overall vision for travel assistance is to promote the independence and wellbeing of all young people and a range of travel options are offered. Where eligibility to travel assistance exists, the Council will arrange the travel support and inform you as soon as possible.

This could include:

Public transport passes

These can be provided by the Council for eligible young people to be able to travel to education, including before 9.30am. It may be necessary for you or another adult to accompany your child. The council offers training in independent travel to help children and young people feel confident about their journey and prepare for adulthood.



Individual taxi

Individual taxis are not provided for solo travel. If your child travels alone because there are no other pupils in the area attending, please be aware that additional pupils may be added to the route at any time.



Independent Travel Allowance (ITA)

4 journeys per day at 45p per mile based on the shortest road distance for parent/carers who prefer to take their children to and from school.

A seat on a shared vehicle – with other young people travelling to school

Where there is an available vehicle running to a school and there is space, this will be considered first, and where possible, the young person will be added. If there are no available vehicles, a larger vehicle may be provided for a particular route.

NB: Individual transport will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, for example, if a child has complex medical needs or is in receipt of funded 1 to 1 support in their education setting.

Personal Travel Budgets

A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) is a sum of money paid to parents or carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability who qualify for free school transport.

What are the benefits of a PTB?

- ✔ Having a personal travel budget gives your family the flexibility to make their own arrangements about how your young person will get to and from school or college on a daily basis.
- ✔ We will tailor each PTB to the needs of each family and the total amount will not be more than the cost would be of your child/children being on our transport services.
- ✔ If you are interested in having a discussion around PTBs, you can contact the Team via our online enquiry form - customer.surreycc.gov.uk/home-to-school-enquiry
- ✔ For post 16 students there is a Bursary available, and more information can be found the Government website - www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

Is a passenger assistant provided?

A Passenger Assistant (PA) may be provided if deemed necessary, this will be according to:

- A child's medical needs, particularly if medication may be required.
- Where a child's individual needs represent a clear danger or health and safety risk to themselves, other passengers, and drivers/other PAs in the vehicle.
- A PA is attached to an individual child and not a vehicle so they may be removed from a route at any time.

Please be aware that individual Passenger Assistants are not provided for solo travel unless there is a significant medical need. If your child travels alone because there are no other pupils in the area attending, please be aware that additional pupils may be added to the route at any time.

Advice for additional cohorts of children and young people when applying for travel assistance

Medical needs

The Council makes every effort to ensure that appropriate travel provision is in-place for your child, particularly if there are complex health and/or medical needs that must be considered.

There have been recent challenges in securing specialist provision for high and/or complex medical needs due to a lack of suitable providers. In instances where we are unable to secure specialist transport provision, measures such as Personal Travel Budgets (PTB's) may be offered as a short-term measure and the Council will engage with families throughout the assessment process.

Other educational placements

Dual placements

Dual placements are where a child or young person attends more than one school or where a school arranges a college link placement for a pupil. Dual placements may require additional transport assistance, such as transport at earlier or later times of the school day. Schools and education settings are responsible for arranging and paying for the cost of such transport. Where a pupil is on the roll at one school but visits another school for inclusion or link purposes, the school where the pupil is usually based will be responsible for arranging and paying for transport.

If the Council agrees a package for a child or young person that involves their education split between two schools, it will consider a request for travel assistance to both settings on a case-by-case basis. An independent travel allowance (ITA) may also be offered.

EOTAS (Education Other than at School) and Alternative Provision

In some circumstances, certain placements and education settings are not named in Section I of a child's Education, Health and Care Plan and consequently those pupils will not be eligible for travel assistance.

When a placement such as EOTAS or Alternative Provision is first discussed, case officers within SEND should initiate a conversation around getting that child to the agreed placement as it is deemed to be parental responsibility.

However, it is acknowledged that this may represent a challenge, and the Council may offer an independent travel allowance by way of support to the families to get their children to and from those provisions.

In extenuating circumstances where travel assistance in the form of contracted transport is offered, it will only be a shared route and agreed from the start and end of a normal school day.

All requests for travel assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Journey times

National recommendations on the maximum length of a single journey are:

→ 45 minutes for a primary aged child and,

→ 75 minutes for a secondary aged child.

The Council aims to meet these recommendations, however, Surrey is a large county, and many of our children and young people are currently travelling many miles to specialist schools, often across the county and sometimes even further afield.

In some instances, it might be impossible to meet the recommended times, even without the added factor of traffic congestion.

In line with the SSTAT's Summer review of travel arrangements, if a journey time is increased owing to more children in a vehicle, then this may prompt a review of an existing or newly assigned route.



Independent Travel Training (ITT)

The Independent Travel Training programme is part of a national scheme which enables children and young people to learn new life skills towards independence, prepare for adulthood, and provides a valuable skill to give greater opportunities for social activity and employability.

The Council understands it may not be suitable for all children with SEND additional needs and disabilities, and will work with schools and families, as well as their training provider, to offer a programme of 1 to 1 support.



Further information is included in the Council's travel assistance policy and the training provider's website - please use these links:

- ITT provider website - www.surreychoices.com/what-surrey-choices-does/employment-and-learning/surrey-choices-travel-choices
- ITT overview Surrey County Council - www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport/school-and-college-travel-options/travel-choices-helping-children-and-young-people-travel-independently-to-school

What you can expect from the Local Authority

The Council aim to provide a service that, by understanding each child's and young person's needs, delivers safe, secure, and comfortable journeys between home and school or college, where pupils:

- Arrive at school or college ready to learn.
- Are picked up on time, arrive at school or college on time and are taken home on time.
- Are safeguarded and their needs are met.
- Are supported, where possible and appropriate, to travel independently.

The Council and your transport provider will always aim for:

- The application process to be smooth and timely.
- Communication to be clear and consistent throughout the application process and the duration of your child or young person's receipt of travel assistance.
- Decisions made when assessing eligibility are fair, consistent and in line with national statutory guidance and any Council-specific policies.

Appropriate training is given to transport providers, taking into account the individual needs of each child:

- Staff that are appropriately trained and vetted, to include DBS checks for drivers and PA's.
- A reliable service which arrives on time.
- A clean, safe, and secure vehicle.
- Trained, polite and consistent staff.

NB: The Council only provides home to school transport in the mornings and the afternoons. They cannot provide transport for any other journeys including personal medical appointments and any extra-curricular activities outside of these times.

Top tips to make home to school transport a success

The Council and transport providers see parents and carers as key partners in supporting our children and young people to and from their education setting safely and comfortably.

The majority of school transport journeys are in shared transport, and you can help your child and other Surrey children have successful journeys, on time to school and home every day by:

- ✔ Helping your child to be ready for collection at the agreed time. Drivers could wait for up to five minutes after the scheduled pick up or drop off time. If there is something either the driver or the transport team could do differently to enable your child to leave promptly, do discuss it with them.
- ✔ Being present for your child's collection and drop off each day. Drivers aren't able to collect from the front door nor can they drop off unless there is an adult to meet the child.
- ✔ Letting the transport provider know as soon as possible if your child won't be travelling that day. If your child is sick or unable to attend for another reason, help save an unnecessary journey for other children and the driver.
- ✔ Keeping the Council and transport provider updated with your contact details. When they need to contact you, they'll need to do so quickly, so tell them any changes to your home, work and mobile phone numbers, email address and emergency contact details and emergency drop off location.
- ✔ Telling the driver and / or passenger assistant if there are details you think they should know. This might be a difficulty your child is having on a specific day or more generally. Discuss how you can work together and find solutions to mutually support your child at the start, during and at the end of their journeys.
- ✔ Telling the transport team if think your child's additional need or disability means that they may display distressed behaviour that affects them being able to self-regulate and could impact their wellbeing, the journey, other passengers, a PA or the driver. A needs assessment may be done and options to ensure everyone has a safe journey will be discussed with you.

Safeguarding and reporting an onboard incident

There is a contract management process in place to manage complaints against approved suppliers, drivers and PAs. There is also a dedicated SSTAT Safeguarding Officer in the Contracts Team who manages any allegations against drivers or passenger assistants. If the Team receives an allegation and/or complaint, it is logged and the following initial actions are undertaken:

- Referral to LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if necessary.
- Driver/PA suspension from specific routes or all services.
- Report gathering and any clarifications needed as part of the review as required.

Once a decision has been made on formal next actions it is updated to the Allegations Complaint List (against the individual driver/PA under investigation) until the investigation is completed and closed under – Substantiated, Unsubstantiated or Unfounded.

Timescales for the conclusion of any investigation can vary depending on the severity and who is involved. For instance, if we need to engage with the LADO, we must follow their timescales for any investigation.

Contacting the Council

In the event that you wish to log an incident or concern, please submit an online enquiry form – customer.surreycc.gov.uk/home-to-school-enquiry

Telephone contact can be made via our Contact Centre on – **0300 200 1004**

These lines are open 9am–5pm Monday to Friday and will be able to support and direct your calls appropriately. The SLA on call backs is 24 hours and may be adjusted during peak periods.

Within the online enquiry form there is the option to select a safeguarding concern where we encourage parent / carer to log any concerns they may have here or to call the contact centre as detailed above. Both routes are marked as a priority and would be dealt with as a matter of urgency by the teams within 24 hours.

The appeal process

All parents and carers have the right to appeal a decision made about Home to School Travel Assistance. You can appeal a decision if any of the following apply:

- You believe the policy has been applied incorrectly.
- You believe there may be exceptional circumstances.
- Your child is attending their nearest available school but does not meet the distance requirement and you believe the walking route is unsafe.

If an application for travel assistance has been refused, the parent/carer will be written to with an explanation of the decision. The letter will advise the parent of their right to appeal the decision.

Before you appeal, the Council suggests that you:

Read: www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport/existing-users/appealing-a-travel-assistance-decision

Request a call back via online enquiry form to discuss your case and so we can understand any mitigating circumstances you may have.

If you are still not satisfied, an appeal can be made using this form: customer.surreycc.gov.uk/stage-one-travel-assistance-appeal

Similarly, if you are not satisfied with the mode of travel assistance you have been allocated, you should complete the relevant contact form (see section below) and the arrangement will be reviewed by senior managers.

If the outcome of that review is no recommended changes, then you can ask for your concerns to be escalated to a stage 2 appeal.

How to contact us

Telephone

0300 200 1004

Contact form

If you have a concern or query regarding any aspect of the travel assistance service, then please use the online enquiry form:

customer.surreycc.gov.uk/home-to-school-enquiry

Finance queries - Personal Travel Budget (PTB) or Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) ONLY

Please email parent.travel@surreycc.gov.uk



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Below is a set of FAQs produced by the Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team in collaboration with Family Voice Surrey.

In many of the scenarios outlined below, completing our online enquiry form is the best way to contact the Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team, to help us direct and answer your queries:

customer.surreycc.gov.uk/home-to-school-enquiry

Q: I am separated from my partner and we share custody, can my child be collected from one parent at the start of the week and the other parent at the end of the week?

A: Ordinarily, travel assistance will only be provided to the address registered with the child's school, however we would look into individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Q: I have concerns about my child's driver - who do I report these to?

A: Please use the online enquiry form or contact Surrey's Contact Centre to raise any concerns you have over the driver or passenger assistant.

Q: Whose responsibility is it for arranging and providing a suitable car seat for my child?

A: The Council will provide a suitable car seat where required. Please ensure that all details of the child's needs, height and weight are correct in the application and we will work to ensure that the correct car seat is in place before transport starts. In some circumstances we may request the use of the family's car seat where transport has been put in place at short notice or different equipment is required to keep the child safe on home to school transport.

Q: What training do drivers and PA's have before being a driver for home to school transport and what safeguarding checks are carried out?

A: All drivers and passenger assistants utilised on Surrey School Travel & Assessment Team (SSTAT) contracts will be in possession of an Authorised Identity Badge (AIB). This confirms their clearance to work with children and vulnerable adults, please feel free to ask for and check these badges. The AIB application process includes an Enhanced DBS Disclosure, overseas criminal history checks if the applicant has lived outside the UK for a period of longer than 3 months since the age of 16, their right to work in the UK and an English language test. Drivers will also be subject to a driving licence check and will need to supply confirmation of their professional licensing arrangements. Prior to their AIB being issued the driver or passenger assistant will have to complete an online Barnardo's Safeguarding course. They will also have to complete two classroom training sessions on Safeguarding and Disability Awareness during their first year of service and before their AIB will be renewed.

All drivers and operators must demonstrate that they speak English before they are permitted to transport children and young people.

Q: My child is being hurt by another child during the journey and the driver is unable to intervene as they are driving. How can I get this resolved?

A: Please use the online enquiry form or contact Surrey's Contact Centre to raise any concerns you have over the route so that this can be investigated.

Q: My child has a Surrey disabled bus pass but is unable to use it before 9.30am. How can they get to school on time using public transport?

A: If a child or young person is eligible for travel assistance provided by the local authority and a bus pass is issued, the pass can be used at all times of the day.

If your young person holds a disabled person's bus pass scheme, then this is part of a national scheme that isn't coordinated by Surrey County Council and as such, we do not have any influence over its time restrictions.

Q: My child wants to attend an after-school club, can they be collected later so they can attend?

A: No, we only provide transport at the start and end of a normal school day.

Q: The driver has been getting later and later each day and my child has been late for school, who do I report this to?

A: A parent or carer can fill out an online enquiry form to report transport operator lateness – which can then be investigated by the delivery team to either respond directly to the parent/carers depending on issue raised around lateness, timings, and/or give the response to the Administration Team to respond directly to the enquiry.

Q: My child's driver suddenly changed with no notice and my child refused to go to school with the new driver - what notice should we be given in these situations?

A: Where possible suppliers should notify families of changes to transport staff in order to prepare the child. Unfortunately, sometimes this may be with very late notice given operational issues and challenges at hand. Please use the online enquiry form or contact Surrey's Contact Centre to raise any concerns you have over the route so that this can be investigated.

Q: My child is very anxious about travelling to school - what can be done to support them with this?

A: We could encourage a conversation with their current education setting in the 1st instance. In some circumstances, depending on the level of need, the Transport team may be able to review an existing route to see if any changes can be made. If assistance has not yet started, and the level of anxiety is documented within the child or young person's evidence, this can be shared with the transport operator, so they are aware.

Q: My child is continuing on in the same school - will they continue to have the same driver?

A: While we will always aim to ensure continuity, there will be some circumstances where a current arrangement may change. Reasons for this can include:

- A change in vehicle owing to more children added to a route.
- A change in operator.
- A change in driver.

If a change occurs, we will aim to notify you two weeks before transport is due to restart.

Q: My child doesn't like being close to other people and needs space around them. Another child has just been added to the route and my child is being squashed into the door, this is causing huge anxiety - how can this be resolved?

A: One of the Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team will be able to discuss the current arrangement with you. Please submit an online enquiry form detailing the circumstances.

Q: My child is not well and unable to go to school who do I need to contact?

A: Please contact the transport operator, who will ensure the Council is notified.

Q: My child has a childminder after school whilst I am working - can they be dropped off at their home?

A: Ordinarily, travel assistance will only be provided to the address registered with the child's education setting.

Q: I don't get home from work until after the time my child will arrive back, so they have key to let themselves in - the driver says I have to be there is that correct?

A: A parent or carer would need to raise an enquiry form and we would need the parent to state in writing they are giving permission allowing the young person to let themselves into the family home with key, which then negates the transport operator code of conduct regarding handing over to a responsible adult. The Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team would in-turn notify the transport operator in writing and copy in the parent for transparency and confirmation. We would then make a note of this on our pupil database and file the email correspondence for auditing purposes.

Q: My child is being collected 2 hours before school starts and 2 hours after it finishes due to the amount of children on the route - this is totally exceeding the national recommendations for timescales and my child is exhausted, it should only take 30 minutes so this is over double the time - what can I do about this?

A: One of the Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team will be able to discuss the current arrangement with you. Please submit an online enquiry form to enable them to review the route and journey times.

Q: Can we claim a travel allowance for half the week and get transport for the other half?

A: Yes, if you are eligible and that is the agreed travel plan.

Q: Is there any way of tracking my child's journey so that I know they have arrived at school safely?

A: Currently, there is no facility for you to do this.

Q: How do you assess the distance from home to school?

A: We use a Geographical Information System (GIS) to measure the safest walking route from home to school. This mapping system is linked to Ordnance Survey.

Q: What happens if I move house?

A: Please complete a change of address form - customer.surreycc.gov.uk/travel-assistance-change-of-address

Q: My child is unable to attend their current setting and has been placed in a short-term alternative provision, can they get transport?

A: Requests for travel assistance to an alternative provision site will be considered on a case-by-case basis. You are now able to indicate travel assistance to an alternative learning placement on the application form.

Q: I haven't received my payment for the independent travel allowance this month, who can I contact about this?

A: Please contact the Finance Team by emailing parent.travel@surreycc.gov.uk

Q: My child is hugely anxious around other people - can they travel alone as being with others will cause huge distress?

A: Individual transport will only be agreed in extenuating circumstances. This would normally be linked to other medical needs or where the child or young person is receiving funded one-to-one support at their educational placement.

Q: My 2 children both attend the same school and travel together with a PA. One of my children is changing schools will they still have a PA?

A: If the PA (Passenger Assistant) is assigned to the child who is leaving the route, then no, a PA will no longer be on board and will transfer to the new route with the child they are allocated to.

Q: My child uses a wheelchair, will this fit in the vehicle?

A: We are investigating improving our ability to assess wheelchair suitability in advance of a transport start date, which will ensure that the assessment process occurs earlier in the calendar year or in advance of a start date as much as possible, if the application is for transport to start during the school year.

Q: Will the driver assist my child who is a wheelchair user into school?

A: Ordinarily we would expect the school and family to collect and deliver the child from the vehicle. However, where this is not possible the driver would need to use an element of common sense and need to make a clear decision around any risks.

Q: My child suffers from seizures and may need medication administered during the journey. Who will do this and what training will they receive?

A: Passenger Assistants will not normally be expected to administer medical assistance. However, parents will need to state any medical conditions and required medication on the Travel Assistance application. These will then be referred to colleagues in the Children and Family Health Surrey who will advise of the appropriate levels of support and training required. Members of transport staff are not usually permitted to administer medication or to replace medical accessories (for example, gastrostomy or tracheotomy tubes) on board a vehicle. The exception to these are pre-loaded EpiPens® or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices as these are loaded with the correct dosage of medication and do not require members of transport staff to accurately measure medication within a confined and possibly moving space. This can only be done with prior agreement from Surrey and the appropriate training having been completed.