

School Travel Service

Guide
co-produced
with the
Southampton
Parent Carer
Forum

Please use this guide to understand the support that your child may be entitled to from Southampton City Council's School Travel Service and where to go for further information.



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The full School Travel Service policy, including eligibility criteria, is available on the council's website at www.southampton.gov.uk/schooltravel.



What is the School Travel Service?

Most children make their own way to school, either accompanied by a parent or carer, or independently if they are older. However, for some children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) this may not be possible, either because their school is too far away or because they are not able to walk to school or use public transport.

These children may be eligible for support with school travel from the School Travel Service, which local authorities have a duty to provide.

In some exceptional circumstances, children without SEND may be considered for school travel support. Each case is reviewed against a list of criteria and the outcome is not guaranteed. More about applying for exceptional circumstances school travel support can be found on the web page www.southampton.gov.uk/exceptional-circumstances.

How do I know if my child or young person is eligible for school travel support?

For under 16s:

Southampton City Council has a statutory duty to provide free of charge travel support for eligible children of compulsory school age (5 to 16). If your answer to any of these questions is yes, your child may be eligible for school travel support:

- Is your child between 5 and 16 years of age and do they have an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)?
- Does your child have a special educational need and/or disability (SEND) or a mobility problem that prevents them walking to school or travelling independently, even with a parent or carer?
- Do you have a disability that prevents you from accompanying your child to school?

Note: If your child is not in any of the above categories, they may still be eligible for school travel support.

This will depend on your financial circumstances and/or the distance between their home and the most suitable school.

You'll find more information about who is eligible for school travel on the web page www.southampton.gov.uk/schooltravel.

If your child does not meet the criteria for statutory travel support, they may be eligible for help under the exceptional circumstances criteria. See more information on the web page www.southampton.gov.uk/exceptional-circumstances/.

For over 16s:

Local authorities are not required to provide free or subsidised travel support for young people over 16 receiving education or training. The council decides how best to support their independence and preparation for adulthood, and where appropriate employment. Free school travel support is only provided for young people in this category with SEND.

Your young person may receive help with travel if they are either:

- A student between the age of 16 and 19 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities who attends a school, further education provision or has a place on an apprenticeship.
- An 'adult learner' between the ages of 19 – 25 years in further education whose Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) identifies that travel support is needed.

More about the eligibility criteria for post-16 travel support can be found on the web page www.southampton.gov.uk/further-education-travel-support.

How can I apply for school travel support

Full details of how to apply for school travel support for your child can be found on the website at

www.southampton.gov.uk/schooltravel.



- Information about school travel support for a child or young person with SEND i.e. who has an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), whether at a mainstream or SEND school, can be found on the web page www.southampton.gov.uk/sen-placement-transport.

If you require a paper version of the application form, or need assistance with your application, please ring us on **023 8083 3013** or email

0-25service@southampton.gov.uk.



- If your child does not meet the standard criteria for travel support and you wish to submit an exceptional circumstances application, you can email travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk or ring us on **023 8083 2419** to request a form. Evidence that needs to be provided can be found on the web page www.southampton.gov.uk/exceptional-circumstances/.

If you wish to send supporting documents with your application, for example information about extenuating circumstances (such as family ill health, bereavement or low income), please scan and send them by email if possible. Alternatively, you can post documents to us:

School Travel Service

Civic Centre, Civic Centre Road, Southampton, SO14 7LY.

Documents may include some of the following:



- Report or supporting statement from relevant medical professionals involved with the child, young person, parent or carer (e.g. GP, physio or occupational therapist).



- Report or supporting statement from relevant professionals involved with the child, young person, parent or carer (e.g. the child's school, social worker or case officer).



- Evidence of low income (e.g. confirmation from the child's school that they are in receipt of Free School Meals or last three months Universal Credit statements).



- Evidence relating to an unforeseen house move.



- A copy of the EHCP.

When can I apply for school travel support?



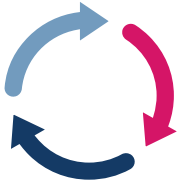
If applying for the start of a new school year (September):

Apply for school travel support as soon as your child or young person's school or education setting has been confirmed. The deadline for applications for travel support to mainstream schools is 31 May of the same year. For applications received after 31 May, travel support may not be in place for the start of the school term in September.



If applying for a start date at another time of year:

You should apply for travel support as soon as possible, if you believe you are eligible. For children or young people who are undergoing an Educational Health and Care Needs assessment period, please apply for travel support as soon as the EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) is finalised and the school place or education setting has been confirmed.



When should I re-apply?

- Everyone receiving school travel support should re-apply each year, except for some families who will be contacted by us to tell them they do not need to re-apply. Only those families who hear from us do not need to re-apply each year.
 - You will also need to re-apply during the year if your child changes school or address.
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When will I hear?

We aim to let parent carers know about travel arrangements for the following school or education setting year by the end of August. You will be notified by email or letter, or in some cases by phone with the details confirmed in a follow up email or letter.

While you are waiting to hear from us, you can check on this web page for progress updates

www.southampton.gov.uk/school-travel-service-updates/.

If your child is not be eligible for school travel support, you will be given the reason(s) why with information about how you can appeal the decision. See this web page for more information www.southampton.gov.uk/school-travel-service/appeal-a-decision.

Personal Travel Budgets as a school travel option

You can apply for a **Personal Travel Budget (PTB)** if your child or young person:



- is entitled to school travel support,



- has an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) and attends a specialist provision (not available for pupil referral units),



- and, has been assessed as needing specialist transport in a single provision.

If you are offered a PTB and accept it, you will be responsible for the transport to and from school for your child or young person.

See our school travel policy for more information.

If you have a question about Personal Travel Budgets, please contact the School Travel Service by phone on: 023 8083 2419 or email us at: travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk.

What you can expect from the School Travel Service

Southampton City Council aims to process applications for school travel support quickly. We also aim to provide a service to eligible children and young people that delivers safe, secure and comfortable journeys between home and school or education setting, where pupils arrive ready to learn.

The School Travel Service aims to:

- Process applications in a timely manner,
- Communicate clearly and consistently throughout the application process,
- Make decisions when assessing eligibility fairly and in line with national statutory guidance,
- Provide appropriate training to passenger assistants and transport operators,
- Provide a reliable service that meets the needs of each child or young person.



Top tips for making school travel a success for everyone

The council, transport providers and parent carers need to work together to ensure Southampton’s children and young people can get to and from their place of education safely and comfortably.

If your child or young person is offered school travel in a taxi or minibus, it will usually be a shared vehicle. You can help your child or young person (and other children) have a successful journey, and arrive at their education setting on time every day, by following these top tips:



- **Make sure we have your correct contact details.**

If you change your home, work or mobile phone numbers, email address, emergency contact details or emergency drop off location, make sure the School Travel Service team have your correct contact details so that we can contact you quickly if we need to.



- **Make sure your child or young person is ready for collection at the agreed time each day.**

The passenger assistant and driver often have several pupils to collect each day, so please ensure your child or young person is ready for collection at the agreed time. This helps ensure everyone can arrive on time.



- **Be there for your child or young person's collection and drop off each day.**

Drivers are not able to come to the front door to collect your child or young person's and they can only drop your child off if there is a known adult to meet them.



- **Let us know as soon as possible if your child or young person is unable to attend.**

If your child or young person is sick or unable to attend for another reason, let the School Travel Service office (plus the passenger assistant/driver if at short notice) know as soon as possible. This will help save an unnecessary journey for others and the driver.



- **Tell the passenger assistant and/or driver if there are details you think they should know.**

Things you may want to share with the passenger assistant and/or driver can include a difficulty your child or young person is having on a specific day or more generally. Discuss how you can work together to support your child or young person at the start, during and at the end of their journeys.



- **Let us know if your child or young person's additional need or disability could affect other passengers, a passenger assistant or the driver.**

Always tell the School Travel Service if you think your child or young person's additional need or disability means that they may display behaviour that is likely to impact their wellbeing, the journey, other passengers, a passenger assistant or the driver. A risk assessment may be required and we'll discuss with you the options for ensuring everyone has a safe journey.



- **Let us know what you Plan B is.**

Make sure the School Travel Service team know what alternative arrangements you have for the rare occasion when we are unable to provide your travel support. Use this number to contact the School Travel Service dedicated telephone line: **023 8083 2419.**



Frequently Asked Questions

The answers to many frequently asked questions about the School Travel Service can be found on the website at www.southampton.gov.uk/faqs-school-transport-support.

How can I give feedback on the School Travel Service?

For day-to-day concerns regarding your child or young person's travel arrangements, always call the School Travel Service dedicated telephone line: **023 8083 2419**.

For general feedback on the service, whether positive or negative:

Email: travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk.

If you want to escalate a concern and make a formal complaint, please visit the council's complaints procedure on this web page www.southampton.gov.uk/complaints.

How to contact us

If you require assistance with an application for school travel, have a question about the School Travel Service, want to raise a concern or leave some feedback you can contact us on:

- Telephone: **023 8083 2419**
- Email: travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk

Note: If your call is not about an urgent issue with your child or young person's travel arrangements for the day, you may wish to call during a quieter period i.e. 10.30am to 2pm.

To discuss eligibility for a child or young person with a disability or special educational need, please contact the Children's Services SEND team on:

- Telephone: **023 8083 3013**
- Email: 0-25service@southampton.gov.uk