

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRANSPORT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens if my child requires medication in an emergency on board transport?

Unfortunately, medication cannot currently be given while on board school transport, so although transport services would still be offered to children who may need medication in an emergency, the parents of these children would need to be fully aware that no medication would be directly provided by the transport staff, and that the escort would closely follow procedure in these cases by calling 999 for a paramedic crew to attend the scene. (See section 13, **Medication on Board Transport** , for more details.)

What happens if my child is sick and can't go to school? Who do I tell?

If your child is unwell and is unable to attend school, you should contact the transport company responsible for transporting your child the night prior to travel. If your child only shows signs of being ill on the morning of travel, you must call the transport company as soon as possible before the transport is due to arrive. (See section 15, **Absences**, for more details.)

Who do I call if there is a timing issue with my child's pick-ups and drop-offs? The transport is arriving late at least twice per week.

Initially you should contact the appropriate Transport Manager for the company responsible for transporting your child to resolve this problem. If, after discussion with the Transport Manager, the circumstances do not get any better, please contact the Contracts Officer. (See section 14, iii, **Timing and Arrangements of Pick-ups and Drop-offs**, for more details.)

Why can't my child be taken to the dentist in his lunch hour and be returned to school in time for his afternoon lessons?

The Authority is not responsible for providing transport to help your child attend medical appointments. It is our duty, by law, to assist your child in getting between home and from school. Any journeys which are not covered within our transport arrangement for your child are classified as 'additional journeys'. The Authority does not fund any additional journeys, nor does it fund any extra routes which are put in place by anyone other than officers working within the SEN Transport Department. (See section 18, **Extra journeys**, for more details.)

What happens if I cannot meet my child at the designated time and/or place?

If you know in advance that you will not be able to meet your child at the authorised drop-off time and place, you should contact the Transport Manager immediately. Your child can be taken directly to your nominated alternative address (rather than returned to school) if the transport company know in advance that you will not be able to meet your child. There may be some cases where the Transport Manager and/or the Contracts Officer ask you to confirm these changed details in writing (either by email or by using pen and paper). This is to ensure that we are taking our duty of care towards your child very seriously and do not want to put them in the care of any other adult, unless this has been approved by one of his or her parents. By letting the transport company know in advance, this also minimises the disruption to the service for other children on board the vehicle.

(See section 17, **The Nearest Place of Safety**, for more details.)

My child's journey is taking 1½ hours, which is far too long. Who should I contact about this?

For children who travel to schools in Kingston, we expect journeys to normally take up to 75 minutes, although journey times can sometimes become affected by heavy traffic and/or roadworks in the local area. Please take this into account if the abnormally long journeys experienced by your child are rare. If you find that your child's journeys are regularly taking 1½ hours, please contact the transport company responsible for transporting your child. If by contacting the transport company responsible you have been unable to resolve the matter, please contact the Contracts Officer directly on the telephone number listed on page 9.

(See section 14, v, **Journey Times**, for more details.)

Why does my child get transported via an Atkins bus and not by taxi?

Atkins buses are provided to transport children who attend our in-borough special needs schools. If a child is attending one of those schools, they should expect any transport service we provide to be on one of the Atkins buses. However, if your child's SEN statement or characteristics of their special need suggest that it may be difficult for your child to travel on the bus with other children (for example, challenging and/or violent behaviour, or if your child had a severe medical or physical need), we may provide a taxi for their transport.

Why does my child have to share their taxi with other pupils?

The Authority receives funding from two sources – central government and the income from in-borough council tax – and is obliged to demonstrate to both central government and council tax payers that it is using the funds available to it in the most efficient way. If we were to provide separate taxis

for each pupil who required taxi transport between home and school, this would not be using funding in the most efficient and cost-effective manner and could have an impact on other services provided by the Council. (See section 11, **Transport Arrangements** for more details.)

What should I do if I think my child has reached the stage where they can now travel independently?

When your child reaches this stage where you would like to trial some independent travel, contact the Contracts Officer on the telephone number listed on page 10. The officer will discuss this with you to ensure you feel comfortable about your child travelling independently. He or she may suggest that you contact your child's school, who may be able to give you some tips about how this type of independent travel training may work more effectively. Your child's school may also have an Independent Travel training scheme in operation, aimed at encouraging your child's awareness and perception skills, both of which are needed for independent travel.

To support independent travel training, the Local Authority is always happy to put arranged transport (provided by either bus or taxi) temporarily on hold, while you privately assess your child's potential to carry out transport on their own. All we ask is that you notify us once you are satisfied that he or she is able to do this sufficiently – this is just so that another child is then able to benefit from using this spare seat on board our routes.

What is defined as “nearest suitable school”?

The Statutory Assessment Team have carried out an extensive assessment of your child's needs. Within this assessment, various specialists have analysed your child's health and medical needs, along with any emotional, social and behavioural difficulties they may experience. Having carried out this assessment, the team have fully identified the special needs of your child. As such, the Statutory Assessment Team will identify a list of schools which are best suited to your child's needs and then determine the closest one with spaces available for new pupils.

What if my application for travel assistance is refused?

All applications are processed in the same way. If your application for transport assistance is rejected and you are not satisfied that the final decision reflects the needs of your child, you may appeal. If you would like more information about the appeals process, please contact the Contracts Manager on 020 8547 5300.