

SEND Travel Assistance Information fact sheet for families (Aged 5 to 16)



Croydon Council SEND Travel Factsheet

Most children make their own way to school either accompanied by their parents, or independently if they are older. For some children with special educational needs and/or 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. In these circumstances you may be eligible for free travel arrangements for your child.

Local authorities must make travel arrangements they consider necessary to enable eligible children to attend school. These arrangements must be provided free of charge under section 508B of the Education Act 1996.

This factsheet will tell you:



Which children are eligible for free school transport



How to challenge a school transport decision



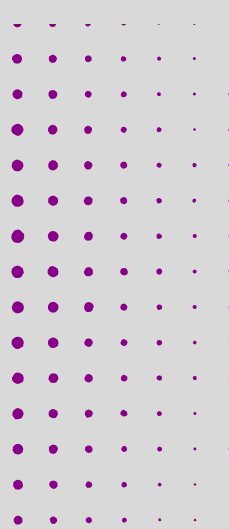
What sort of transport can be provided



Where to go for more information



How to apply for school transport



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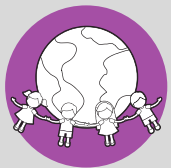
Which children are eligible for free school transport?

If your child cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of a special educational need, disability, or mobility problem, they may be entitled to free school transport, regardless of the distance they live from the school.

An assessment will be made on the child's individual needs.

Statutory guidance says: 'Usual transport requirements (e.g. the statutory walking distances) should not be considered when assessing the transport needs of children eligible due to SEN and/or disability.'

This criterion applies to all children with SEND or mobility difficulties, not just children with EHC plans or who attend special schools. Croydon authority will consider whether your child can walk, alone or with an adult, and if it would be reasonable to expect a parent to accompany the child.



Under 5s

There is no duty to provide transport until children reach compulsory school age the term after they turn five.

However, Croydon Council usually provides travel support for four year olds in reception class if they will be eligible when they are five. We do not generally support children attending nurseries.

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Children with EHC Plans – school preference

It is important that you consider travel arrangements when you are deciding on your preferred school placement for your child, as your preferred school may not necessarily meet the eligibility criteria for travel support. Please talk to your EHCP co-ordinator or the travel eligibility team if you are unsure whether your preferred school will meet the eligibility criteria. The SEND team and travel eligibility team work together to determine the nearest suitable school to be named in part I of the EHCP.

If your child has an EHC plan, you have a right to have your preferred school named in section I if it meets specific criteria, including suitability and efficient use of resources. If the EHC plan names your preferred school with no conditions and it is the only school named, then it automatically counts as the closest suitable for transport purposes, and the local authority must provide free school travel assistance if your child is eligible.

Sometimes however, Croydon local authority may consider that another school nearer to home is also able to meet your child's needs and that the additional transport to your preferred school would cost too much. Croydon council may then either:

- name the further school as parental preference but state in the EHCP that there is a closer suitable school and the parent will be responsible for school transport or;
- name the closer school only.

Qualifying schools

To be entitled to free school transport, your child must attend a 'qualifying school'. These include:

- community, foundation or voluntary schools;
- community or foundation special schools;
- non-maintained special schools;
- pupil referral units

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What sort of transport can be provided?

- **Suitable school Travel options:**

The duty on the local authority is to make suitable ‘travel arrangements’, which may not be door-to-door transport. Depending on the needs of your child you might be offered:

- a bus pass for use on public transport
- travel training to enable an older child to walk or take public transport on their own
- a place on a dedicated school bus
- a shared taxi or minibus
- an individual taxi with or without an escort.
- a mileage allowance or personal transport budget.
- a walking escort.



How to apply for school transport

- You will need to apply formally for travel support and reapply if there are any change in circumstances such as moving home or moving schools. Information on how to apply and the online application form can be found at:
[School travel assistance | Croydon Council](#)
- You should include as much information as you can with your application. It’s important to show that your child meets the eligibility criteria.

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How to challenge a school transport decision

- Appeals process
- You may be unhappy with our decision on school travel, either because we have decided your child is not eligible or you consider that the transport offered is not suitable. We have an appeals process details of this and the appeals form can be found at: [School travel assistance | Croydon Council](#)
- Contact details



Where to go for more information



For further queries please contact transport.eligibility@croydon.gov.uk or



Koreen Sinclair on: 07801992665 or 0208 726 6000 ext 28166