



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Home to School Travel Assistance Policy 2022/23

Including SEND and Post 16 Transport

Introduction

The information given in this booklet relates to the 2022 - 2023 school year and the details are correct as of June 2022.

This booklet sets out Stoke-on-Trent City Council's obligations to provide Home to School Transport to children living in the city who are eligible to receive travel assistance.

When considering whether to assist with home to school transport, Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to have regard to the Education Act 1996 and Schedule 35B of the Act which was inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Sections 508B and 508C of the Act makes provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. The City Council has developed its Travel Assistance Policy in accordance with this legislation and equalities legislation to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duty.

This document is set out in several sections.

Section 1 applies to all children, regardless of age or ability, and sets out the key points relating to eligibility for travel assistance.

Section 2 is for parents of Mainstream School children, and informs them how they can apply for travel assistance if they believe their child will be entitled to support.

Section 3 gives information about specific arrangements in place for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, formerly known as a Statement of Special Educational needs.

Section 4 provides information for all young people attending post 16 education, including those with EHC plans in work based learning.

Section 5 contains Frequently Asked Questions.

Section 6 explains how to make a complaint or how to Appeal against a decision.

Section 7 includes a code of conduct for all young people receiving travel assistance, so that they understand what is expected of them.

Section 8 provides information about alternative ways to get to school or college. It is important that parents understand the criteria for travel assistance before taking the time to make an application.

If in light of the eligibility criteria set out in this booklet, you think it is unlikely your child is eligible to receive free travel assistance, Section 8 of this booklet provides you with information regarding some other options that may be available to help your child to attend school.

If you have applied previously for free home to school transport which has not been awarded, you may apply again if your circumstances have changed, i.e. you child has changed schools, moved address or because the needs of the child have changed.

If your circumstances have changed because of a medical condition or disability, you will need to supply evidence from the relevant medical professional. Contact the appropriate team for advice.

For a child or young person attending a Mainstream school, please contact the Admissions Team.

For child or young person with an Education, Health and Care Plan, please contact SEN Monitoring and Assessment team (SENMAS)

Parents of children and young people with SEN or disabilities who do not require an EHC Plan should, in the first instance contact Admissions to discuss the specific needs of their child.

Contact details will be found at the back of this booklet.

It is strongly recommended that all parents read this guidance carefully along with the information on our website; go to <https://www.stoke.gov.uk> and search for "Home to school transport policy and guidance"

Local Offer: <http://localoffer.stoke.gov.uk>

All information within the Local Offer section is here to support families of children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability (SEND).

Table of Contents

| | Page |
|--|-------|
| Terms we use in this document and what they mean | 5-6 |
| SECTION 1 | |
| ○ The Law | 7-8 |
| ○ Key Principles | 8-9 |
| ○ Who Qualifies | 9 |
| ○ Who does not Qualify | 9-10 |
| ○ The Nearest Appropriate School | 10 |
| ○ Statutory Walking Distance | 10 |
| ○ Children living outside Stoke-on-Trent City | 11 |
| ○ Transport to Pre-School and Nursery provision | 11 |
| ○ Denominational and Faith School Travel | 11 |
| ○ Families on Low Incomes | 11 |
| ○ Children in Local Authority Care | 12 |
| ○ What Travel Assistance May be Offered | 13 |
| ○ Additional Journeys to different schools and/or home addresses | 14 |
| ○ Moving Home and Other Permanent Changes | 14 |
| ○ Temporary changes | 14-15 |
| ○ Medical Conditions | 15 |
| ○ Withdrawal of Transport on Health and Safety grounds | 15 |
| SECTION 2 | |
| ○ How to apply for Travel assistance for a child or young person attending a mainstream school | 16 |
| SECTION 3 | |
| ○ Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan | 17-18 |
| ○ Passenger Assistants | 19 |
| ○ Supporting Independent Travel | 20 |
| ○ Parental Visits to Schools | 20 |
| ○ Pre-school SEN provision | 20 |
| ○ Residential Schools | 20 |
| ○ Termly Boarders | 21 |
| ○ 52 Week Placements | 21 |
| ○ The Annual Review process | 22 |
| SECTION 4 | |
| ○ Post 16 Transport | 23 |
| ○ Post 16 Transport for Students with an EHCP | 23-24 |
| SECTION 5 | |
| ○ FAQs | 25-26 |
| SECTION 6 | |

| | |
|--|-------|
| ○ Appeals and Complaints | 27-30 |
| SECTION 7 | |
| ○ Parental Responsibility | 31 |
| ○ Parents/Carers not at home | 32 |
| ○ Code of Conduct for young people when travelling | 33-34 |
| SECTION 8 | |
| ○ Travel assistance Options Explained | 35 |
| ○ Other ways to get to school | 36-38 |
| ○ Useful Contacts | 39-40 |

Terms we use in this document and what they mean

Parents: Throughout this document the term “parents” should be read to include foster parents, carers and other guardians of children and young people.

SEN/SEND: Special Educational Needs/Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Special School

Defined in CAFA Section 337 (as amended):

A school is a special school if it is specially organised to make special educational provision for pupils with SEN, and it is –

- (a) maintained by a local authority,
- (b) an Academy school, or
- (c) a non-maintained special school.

Mainstream School: as defined in Section 83 of Children and Families Act 2014 (CAFA):

“Mainstream school” means—

- (a) a maintained school that is not a special school, or
- (b) an Academy school that is not a special school;’

Maintained School: An Educational institution funded (maintained) by the Local Authority.

Academy School: A school which is not maintained by the Local Authority and is registered as an independent school, and is subject to a contract between the Academy trust (owner) and the Secretary of State.

Faith School: a school in the United Kingdom that teaches a general curriculum but which has a particular **religious** character or formal links with a **religious** organisation.

Free School: (in England) a school set up by an organization or a group of individuals, funded by the government but not controlled by the local authority.

EHC Plan: Education Health and Care Plan, replaced a Statement of Special Educational Needs

The Council: Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

Admissions: The Council team which assesses applications for places at mainstream schools and transport to mainstream schools

SENMAS: (SEN Monitoring and Assessment). The Council team which assesses applications for school places, and applications for transport to schools for young people with SEN.

Safe and Sustainable Transport (S&ST): The Council team which commissions, allocates and manages the home to school transport contracts on behalf of the Council

SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Service): SENDIASS provides confidential, impartial, free, high quality information, advice and support to children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN); children and young people with disabilities; and their parents.

SECTION 1

The Law

The law with regards to travel assistance is set out in the Education Act 1996 as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Sections 508B and 508C of the Act makes provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. The Council has developed its Travel Assistance Policy in accordance with this legislation and equalities legislation to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duty.

The Department for Education has also issued "Home to School Travel and Transport guidance: Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014" to explain the law and to assist local authorities when they are making decisions.

Statutory Duty

The Council has a statutory duty to provide suitable travel arrangements for eligible children when travel is not otherwise available.

This statutory duty applies to eligible children of statutory school age, normally meaning age 5 to 16.

Eligible children are those who meet any one or more of the following criteria:

1. Unable to travel any distance to school, even if accompanied, because of their SEN or disability
2. Live outside the statutory walking distance from home to school. Statutory walking distance is 2 miles for children aged 5 – 7 and 3 miles for children aged 8 – 16. Mileage is calculated using a safe walking route.
3. Live within walking distance but, having regard to the nature of the route, cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school
4. Their parents are receiving the maximum Working Tax Credit or are eligible for or claiming free school meals (based upon income). Mileage will be reduced to a minimum of 2 miles.

Travel arrangements provided under this duty must be provided free of charge.

The duty applies to children who attend their nearest appropriate school.

Parental means do not play a part in decisions about eligibility for travel assistance, except as stated in 4 above.

Parents receiving the higher rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance and who are therefore entitled to a car for their child's use under the Motability Scheme will be considered under the same eligibility criteria and will normally be offered travel assistance via a mileage reimbursement in the first instance.

Discretionary powers

Local authorities have discretionary powers to provide travel assistance for a child or young person who is not otherwise eligible. The authority reserves the right to request full or part payment of any reasonable travel expenses for children who have travel arrangements made under this discretionary power, i.e. outside the statutory duties. Stoke-on-Trent City Council do not offer vacant seats to non-entitled children and young people.

Parents of children who attend specialist nursery provisions and are below statutory school age but over the age of 2 may apply for travel assistance. Each application will be assessed individually based on the child's specific circumstances and the Council reserves the right to charge towards the cost of any transport assistance provided.

Key Principles

1. Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and for doing all that is reasonably practicable to bring about their child's attendance.
2. When exercising their duties and powers, the local authority needs to take into account the suitability of transport as well as the efficient use of resources
3. Travel assistance will be appropriate to the individual needs and circumstances of the child or young person, and will encourage them to grow in confidence and independence wherever possible.
4. In accordance with the Education Act 1996, local authorities will encourage and promote sustainable travel options and will aim to improve the physical well-being of those who use them and/or the environment. To this end, priority will be given to walking, cycling, public transport, and shared transport.
5. Children and young people who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs (Statement of SEN) / Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or attend a special school do not automatically qualify for travel assistance.
6. Any travel assistance offered will be the most effective and efficient available, in terms of both sustainability and cost and may include the following:
 - a. A pass for a bus, train or other commercially operated mode of transport;
 - b. Independent Travel Training;
 - c. A Local Authority minibus;
 - d. A Personal Travel Assistance Budget (PTAB) agreement allowing parent's flexibility to provide travel assistance for their child;
 - e. A commissioned bus service or shared taxi;
 - f. In a small number of cases, the use of a solo taxi may be considered;
7. It is the responsibility of the Council to decide how they will provide travel assistance.

Parents may be asked to support their child with home to school travel, for example mileage rates or accompaniment on public transport, however this can only be implemented with parental consent.

8. Each year, a child or young person's needs for travel assistance will be reviewed, and assistance may be amended or withdrawn if it is no longer required or a child or young person is no longer eligible.
9. Travel assistance only provides for one journey to and from school and must be used at the beginning and end of normal school hours. Transport will not normally be provided at other times or on a flexible basis.
10. Travel assistance will not be provided for induction and settling in days except where these occupy the same school hours as the rest of the school.
11. Where a child is allocated a pick up point, rather than a pick up from their home address, parents are responsible for ensuring their children get to and from any designated pick up and drop off point for the vehicle and remain responsible for them until they board the vehicle on their way to school or once they leave the vehicle at the end of their return journey. Once on school premises the school becomes responsible for the supervision of the child/young person.
12. The authority is unable to guarantee that pick up or drop off times will be compatible with any other arrangements made by parents.

Who qualifies under this policy?

Children and young people who meet statutory eligibility criteria defined above and who:

- are ordinarily resident in the City of Stoke-on-Trent and
- are of statutory school age.

Students with SEN will also be eligible where their needs are such that they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to and from their place of learning. Parents who believe that their child may be entitled to travel assistance will need to complete an application form.

Who does not qualify?

1. Children under the age of 5 attending nursery or pre-school provision. Parents may apply under the discretionary powers provision, but travel assistance will only be offered in exceptional circumstances.
2. A young person aged 16 or over, whether attending school or another educational establishment. There is a separate policy for Post 16 students, which can be found at Section 4 of this document.
3. A child or young person living within the statutory walking distance from their school or college, except in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Local Authority. If a child or young person lives within the statutory walking distance from his/her school and is able to walk by a safe route, but needs to be accompanied on their journey, the child or young person's parent will normally be expected to accompany the child or young person.
4. A child or young person not attending their nearest appropriate school by parental choice. For children of both primary and secondary age groups, parents would have to apply to the nearest school or have named the nearest

school on their child's admissions application form to be considered for home to school travel assistance. If the nearest school is not named as a higher preference on the admissions form, the child will not be eligible for travel assistance.

5. A child or young person of any age attending an independent mainstream fee paying school.

The Council will not normally provide travel assistance so that parents can take siblings to different schools or go to work at a specific time, etc. For these things, parents are asked to make full use of extended school hours, breakfast clubs and crèches.

The nearest appropriate school

The nearest appropriate school is the nearest geographical school which provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child or young person and any special educational needs the child or young person may have, and which has places available. This can include Faith Schools, Free Schools or Academies.

Appropriateness is assessed under two categories:

- a) Age appropriate, relating to attendance at a primary or secondary school
- b) Ability appropriateness, relating to attendance at a mainstream or special school. Travel assistance will only be provided to the nearest appropriate school where it is more than the relevant distance from home for the age or abilities of the child.

If placement at the parents' preferred school is not compatible with efficient use of resources, i.e. there is an appropriate school closer to home than the preferred school, the Council may agree to place the child in the preferred school as long as parents provide or pay for home to school travel.

If parents have not been offered a place at any of their preferred schools and the Local Authority has offered a place at another school, parents may apply for travel assistance. Parents should remember that their child will not automatically get travel assistance to and from any school that offers them a place.

Statutory Walking Distances

Distances are measured by the shortest available walking route. This may take into account public footpaths where they are available. The shortest available walking route is one where a child or young person, accompanied as necessary by a responsible adult or parent, can walk safely. A route can only be considered hazardous, if it is hazardous for both an adult and child to walk together.

All distances between children's homes and schools are measured using the Authority's GIS system. In this way, all children are assessed consistently in the same way under the distance criterion.

Where upper distance limits apply these are measured using the shortest vehicular road route, not walking routes.

Children and Young People living outside of Stoke-on-Trent

If parents pay their council tax to a council other than Stoke-on-Trent City Council, they must apply to their own Local Authority (LA) for help with transport even if their child is attending a Stoke-on-Trent school.

Travel assistance to Pre-school and Nursery Provision

Travel assistance for 3 and 4-year-old nursery age children attending nursery education provided by the Authority is not a statutory provision. Travel Assistance will therefore only be granted in exceptional circumstances. All applications will be assessed on an individual basis in accordance with Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Travel Assistance Policy. Any assistance granted would relate to the circumstances of the child, not the parent or carer.

All children are entitled to free bus travel on public services up to the age of 5 years old, so long as they are accompanied by an adult. Parents are expected to accompany the child to nursery. Assistance with travel costs for the parents is not provided.

Denominational and Faith Travel

The Council ceased to provide free travel assistance to faith schools from September 2015, other than children and young people who qualify for this through the low income criteria described below. However, any children currently receiving free travel assistance in the form of a bus pass will continue to do so while they are eligible up to the age of 16, or until they move to another school (whichever is earlier).

Families on low incomes

A child or young person will qualify for travel assistance under the low income criteria if they are attending their nearest appropriate school and are entitled to receive free school meals on financial grounds or their parents are in receipt of the Maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Children, who attend a primary school and who are aged 8 years but less than 11 years, must also:

- attend their nearest appropriate school for transport purposes and;
- live between 2-6 miles from the school.

Children attending a secondary school and therefore aged 11 years and over, must also:

- attend one of their three nearest appropriate schools for transport purposes and;
- live between 2-6 miles from the school.

Primary and Secondary aged children, who are attending a faith school must in addition to receiving the benefits above;

- live between 2 – 15 miles from the school
- Be attending a faith school as expressly requested by their parents at time of admission, where that school is the nearest appropriate faith school based upon their religious beliefs.

Travel assistance granted under the low income criteria is reviewed on an annual basis and renewal forms are emailed or posted to parents/carers by the Local Authority normally in May/June, to ensure that arrangements will be ready for them in September. Parents should return the completed form to the Admissions Team, with proof of benefit (if required), as soon as possible, and no later than 31 July each year.

Children in Local Authority Care (CIC)

Children in Local Authority Care are children under the age of 18 years for whom the Local Authority provides accommodation by agreement with their parents/carers (Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) or who is the subject of a care order under Part IV of the Act. This applies equally to children who immediately after being looked after by the Local Authority become subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order. (As defined by Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 or Section 8 or 14A of the Children Act 1989)

It is recognised that for Children in Care, the stability of their educational provision is very important. Each case will be considered on its own merits, however, Children in the Care of Stoke-on-Trent City Council do not have an automatic right to free home to school travel assistance; they are assessed in accordance with Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Travel Assistance policy in the same way as any other child. For children who are cared for by the Council who reside over the statutory distance and are not attending their nearest suitable school, foster carers will be expected to provide this assistance in all but exceptional cases.

Inaccurate Applications

The Council reserves the right to reclaim the cost of any transport provided, if it is found that any incorrect information has been provided to the Council in order to gain admission or transport to a school that would otherwise be outside of the eligibility criteria.

What Travel Assistance may be offered?

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has a duty under Section 508A of the Education Act 1996 to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. This duty applies to all children and young people of compulsory school age (5 to 16) who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council also has the responsibility to ensure the best use of resources on behalf of the residents and Council Tax payers of the City.

The views of the young person and parents will be considered, but the final decision on the type of travel assistance offered will be made by the Council. They will determine the mode of travel assistance that delivers the best value for money for Stoke-on-Trent tax payers, taking into account any special arrangements needed to support the child's particular needs. Where this is different to the views of the parents or the young person, an explanation for the choice will be given.

Parents may be asked to support their child with home to school travel, for example mileage rates or accompaniment on public transport, however this can only be implemented with parental consent.

The options explored will include, but are not limited to:

Stage 1 Travel Assistance:

- Walking (alone or accompanied by parent)
- Walking bus (walking with other children and adult supervisors)
- Cycling
- Scooting

Stage 2 Travel Assistance:

- Bus/Train Pass for public transport
- Discounted travel schemes
- Car Share
- Park and Stride
- Parental mileage
- Personal budget

Stage 3 Travel Assistance:

- Dedicated school bus routes - With passenger assistant if required
- Minibus or shared MPV from pick up points - With passenger assistant if required
- Minibus or shared MPV from door to door - With passenger assistant if required
- Shared Taxis - With passenger assistant if required
- Solo taxi - With passenger assistant if required

More information about some of these options can be found towards the end of this document.

Travel training for all pupils with SEN will be provided where appropriate.

Additional journeys to different schools and/or home addresses

Travel assistance is only provided from the child's home to the school at which they are on roll, at the beginning and end of each school day. If they attend another school or establishment that is arranged through their school as off-site provision, it will be the school and/or parent's responsibility to arrange travel to and from that school or establishment, for their off-site learning.

The child's home address will normally be the one at which they spend the most school nights, and any transport arrangements to or from an alternative address would be the responsibility of the parent to arrange. This includes arrangements for accessing childminders, grandparents or other care arrangements before or after school.

Moving Home and Other Permanent Changes

If you move house, your child's entitlement to travel assistance will need to be reassessed. Parents must inform Admissions or SENMAS as appropriate, of the change as soon as possible. The eligibility for travel assistance will be reassessed against the new address or the school in accordance with Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Travel Assistance policy.

The Council will also investigate whether there are any appropriate schools nearer to the new family home. Where appropriate schools exist nearer to the new family home and the child or young person has a Statement of SEN/EHC Plan, then the Council may consider amending the Statement or Plan to name a closer school.

It will be parents' responsibility to make their own arrangements to transport their children to and from school until any new travel assistance is in place and confirmed.

If your child's school is not deemed as the nearest appropriate school to the new home, your child may not be eligible to receive travel assistance.

Temporary Changes

The Council will consider making special short term amendments to travel assistance if there are exceptional circumstances. However, assistance will not normally be provided for the following:

- to enable a child or young person to attend an after school activity or club;
- for a child or young person in a residential placement who, due to illness, is unable to use the scheduled transport;

- for a child or young person who is taken ill at school and needs to return home before the scheduled transport time
- to enable a child or young person to attend dental, GP or hospital appointments;
- for a child or young person who is unable to be collected from school at the scheduled time due to detention or exclusion
- to or from a place of temporary residence

The Safe and Sustainable Transport team within the Council does not have responsibility to provide transport for children and young people with SEN to and from respite care facilities but will work with families to agree reasonable arrangements that help them access short breaks at the end of a school day where this does not incur additional cost for the Authority.

Medical conditions

To qualify for assistance on medical grounds, the child or young person must be attending their nearest appropriate school and their medical problems must affect their ability to travel to and from school. Parents must provide the Council with evidence from the child or young person's consultant or other relevant medical professional to demonstrate the difficulties they have in walking or travelling on public transport in order to go to and from school, accompanied as necessary by a responsible adult or parent.

If travel assistance is granted on medical grounds, the child's case will be reviewed on a regular basis and up to date information on their medical condition will be required at each review.

Withdrawal of Travel Assistance on Health and Safety Ground

The Council has a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all children and young people for whom travel assistance is provided. We also have an obligation to ensure the health and safety of drivers and passenger assistants.

If a child or young person behaves in a manner that places the health and safety of those on board a vehicle at serious risk, or presents a serious risk to themselves, this may result in travel assistance being withdrawn with immediate effect.

The parent will be informed of any incident that has occurred involving their child and they will be given an opportunity to make representations to the Council or appeal against the Council decision to withdraw travel assistance for their child. Details of how to appeal are in Section 6 of this policy.

The Council will work to find an alternative way for the child to get to school safely but, during this process, the parent of the child or young person will be responsible for making suitable arrangements to get the child or young person to school.

There is a Code of Conduct at page 26 of this document to help young people understand what is expected of them when travelling.

SECTION 2

How to apply for travel assistance to mainstream school

1. All parents wishing to apply for travel assistance should first read the eligibility criteria in Section 1.
2. Parents who believe that their child may be entitled to travel assistance should then contact the Admissions Team for a preliminary discussion over the phone. Contact details are given towards the end of this document.
3. Where Admissions agree that your child may be entitled they will issue you with an application form.
4. The issuing of an application form does not automatically guarantee that your child is entitled to travel assistance.
5. The completed form needs to be returned to the Admissions Team. Where parents apply for travel assistance to start in a new academic year, the application form needs to be received no later than 14 August.
6. Parents must also include any other evidence required to support the application for home to school travel assistance as detailed in the application form.
7. All applications will receive careful consideration. Parents will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing within 15 working days of receipt of the application.
8. If parents disagree with the Council's decision not to provide travel assistance, they may appeal using the process outlined in Section 5. Whilst an appeal is in progress, parents are expected to transport their own child to and from school.

Travel assistance is based upon the distance from the home address to school and will be verified using the information supplied by the parent to the Admissions Team within the Child and Family Services Department. The Admission policy defines a home address as being the address at which the parent ordinarily reside and with whom the child or young person normally lives. In situations of joint parental custody, the home address would be the one at which the parent who is in receipt of the child benefit for that a child or young person resides.

Where applications are received after the closing date, whilst every effort will be made to put travel assistance in place for the first day of term, this cannot be guaranteed.

Until travel assistance is in place, it will be the parent's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their child to attend school.

SECTION 3

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan Formerly known as a Statement of Special Educational Needs

Transport can be an important factor in the support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

All children and young people, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) up to the age of 25, are subject to general Local Authority Transport criteria as described in Section 1 for primary and secondary mainstream children and young people. Travel assistance will additionally be provided for children and young people who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability. Eligibility, for such children will be assessed on an individual basis.

This Policy reflects and complies with the statutory guidance provided in the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 to 25 years' document, last updated 29 January 2015.

There is no guarantee that a child or young person who receives an Education, Health and Care plan will receive home to school transport. All children and young people will be assessed in accordance with Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Travel Assistance Policy, regardless of whether they hold an EHC Plan or not. Parents must therefore first read section 1 to assess whether their child may be eligible for assistance.

Parents of children and young people with SEN or disabilities who do not have or require an EHC Plan should, in the first instance contact Admissions to discuss the specific needs of their child.

1. Parents who believe that their child may be eligible for assistance should first contact SENMAS for a preliminary discussion. Based upon that discussion, SENMAS will send out forms to parents whose child may be eligible. Contact details for SENMAS can be found at the back of this booklet.
2. The issuing of an application form does not automatically guarantee that your child is entitled to travel assistance.
3. The completed form needs to be returned to SENMAS. If the child is transferring to Primary or Secondary school for the first time, the applications must be received in this office no later than 31st May. The contact details are at the end of this document.
4. Parents should also attach any documentation that they feel may be beneficial to the Council when making a decision. It is assumed that a child would travel to and from school, accompanied as necessary by a parent or responsible adult.

5. If the child uses a wheelchair or buggy, or needs to carry equipment, such as oxygen, medication, walking aids, etc. the Council will need to know the details (including make and model of any wheelchair or buggy) to help assess the most appropriate form of travel assistance.
6. All applications will receive careful consideration. Parents will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing within 15 working days of receipt of the application

Where applications are received after the closing date, whilst every effort will be made to put travel assistance in place for the first day of term, this cannot be guaranteed.

Until travel assistance is confirmed and in place, it will be the parent's/carer's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their child to attend school.

If parents have difficulty completing the forms, they should seek support from their Social Worker if they have one, or from their SENCO at their child's school or chosen school to gather the necessary information which will allow the applications to be assessed fully. Parents can also contact SENDIASS for support and assistance if they prefer. Contact details will be found towards the end of this document.

The child or young person's home address will normally be the one at which they spend the most school nights. Any transport arrangements from an alternative address would usually be the responsibility of the parent to arrange.

Transport arrangements for young people with SEN may be more complex than those for mainstream pupils. As a general guide, transport arrangements should not require a child to make multiple changes on public transport or result in an unreasonably long journey time. Government guidelines states that the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age should be 45 minutes. For secondary school children, the length of journey each way should ideally be no more than 75 minutes. A shorter journey time, although desirable, may not always be possible, particularly where the school is outside the Authority area.

Every application will be considered individually on its merits. The SENMAS Team will take into account any information provided by parents, the school, other professionals who know the child and, when appropriate, the child as well.

The Team will consider

- The age of the child or young person;
- Whether a walking route is appropriate;
- The nature and severity of the child or young person's SEND;
- Whether suitable public transport is available;
- Whether the child or young person may present a risk to drivers and other passengers;
- Whether there are any personal/family circumstances which impact on the child or young person's ability to attend school;

- The most cost effective mode of transport for journeys to placements outside of Stoke-on-Trent.

The list is for guidance only, and satisfaction of one or more of the criteria does not automatically support entitlement to travel assistance.

Please be aware that Local Authorities are required to periodically re-tender all transport contracts, to ensure best value for money and efficient use of resources. Where children with an EHC Plan are provided with travel assistance, no guarantee can be given that the arrangements, including any passenger assistant and driver, will stay the same throughout the child's attendance at school.

Passenger Assistants

The aim of the Safe and Sustainable Transport team is to ensure that young people reach their school or alternative placement in a physical and mental state in which they are able to draw sound benefit from the education provided. To this end, a Passenger Assistant may be required to accompany some young people who require additional assistance. There is no minimum and maximum age that determines whether a Passenger Assistant is required.

Dedicated (One to One) Passenger Assistants will be provided when specified by the SENMAS Team, on the basis of needs. The needs of each individual child will be assessed to determine what support or supervision they will require.

Most children and young people will share vehicles with several others attending the same school or one nearby. In some instances it will be appropriate to consider additional support having given consideration to the nature of the journey.

Where multiple children and young people with special needs are to be conveyed at the same time, the Safe and Sustainable Transport team will consider whether there is a need for one or more general Passenger Assistants to be provided to support the driver.

Passenger Assistants will be responsible for the care and supervision of the young people to and from school. They will oversee the child or young person's conduct and safety in such a way that the driver is unhindered in his/her duties. The role of the Passenger Assistant is to assist the driver in the loading of passengers and ensure the passengers are transported in a safe and appropriate manner. All Passenger Assistants are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring check (DBS).

Provision of a Passenger Assistant at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement and the requirement will be reviewed by the SENMAS and Safe and Sustainable Transport teams on a regular basis.

Supporting Independent Travel

As a child or young person becomes older, a move to a more independent method of travel is an important contribution to the development of life skills. The Council encourages a child or young person with a Statement of SEN/EHC Plan to develop independent travel skills where this is a reasonable expectation.

Travel training provides tailored and practical help in travelling by public transport, on foot or by bicycle. Travel training aims to help people travel independently and without fear to work, to education, to other key services, or simply for leisure. In Stoke, Travel Training is a commissioned service, provided to eligible young people through the Special Schools.

The Council will also consider schemes where passenger assistants or “buddies” accompany a child or young person to school using public transport or walking, in order to support greater independence, social skills and to promote good health. Independent travel training does not remove a child’s legal eligibility or affect their entitlement to SEN travel assistance.

Parental visits to schools

Travel assistance will not be provided to parents or family who wish to visit the school for any reason. Any arrangements of this nature will need to be agreed directly with the school.

Parents who wish to accompany their child to school on the first day of school will be expected to make their own arrangements. Where a school stipulates that a parent should attend on the first day, transport must be arranged with the school.

Pre-school Provision for children with SEN

Pre-school children with a statement or who are undergoing statutory assessment are considered for discretionary free transport in the context of advice from medical, psychological and education professionals involved. If assistance were to be awarded, it would only normally be considered to the child’s nearest school/nursery setting or to the school/nursery setting considered appropriate by the Local Authority.

Residential schools

Children and young people who attend a residential school that has been named in their statement of special educational need or their Education, Health and Care Plan as the most appropriate school to meet their needs, will be allowed the following patterns of journeys:

Weekly Boarders

If required, travel assistance will normally be provided at the beginning of the week from home to school and at end of the week from school to home.

Termly Boarders

If required, travel assistance will normally be provided at the beginning and end of each half-term.

52 Week Placements

If required, travel assistance will normally be provided at the commencement and end of the placement.

Transport outside these parameters will remain the responsibility of the parents to provide.

Annual Review Process

All children and young people who receive free home to school travel assistance will be subject to review every year, and in particular:

- At the end of Year 3 in which the child or young person attains the age of 8 years
- At the end of Year 6 in preparation for transfer to Secondary education
- Y9 review for possible requirements for extended curriculum studies
- During Year 11 for those young people transferring to Post 16 in a maintained school
- Following the successful completion of Independent Travel Training

Parents should discuss their need for SEN travel assistance with school staff at their Annual Review meeting. Schools will then forward any relevant details or changes to the Council.

Please note:

1. The Council has discretion to review travel arrangements for a child or young person whenever necessary. The Council may request up-to-date information from parents and/or schools in order to establish whether travel needs have changed.
2. When travel arrangements are reviewed, consideration will be given to strategies for supporting a child or young person with independent travel.

If the Council decides that a child:

- no longer needs a passenger assistant in order to ensure their safety
- OR
- is no longer an “eligible” child and travel assistance should be withdrawn, the Council will inform parents of its decision and the reasons for it.

If a parent disagrees with the decision of the Council they may appeal using the process described in Section 6 below.

SECTION 4

Travel Assistance for young adults 16+ (Post 16 transport)

Sixth Form / Further Education

Free travel assistance provided by the council is limited to statutory school age children and young people; therefore no assistance is given for a young person attending school sixth forms (years 12 and 13) and Colleges of Further Education.

Financial concessions or other support may be available to young people attending school sixth forms (years 12 and 13) and Colleges of Further Education from their respective Educational establishments. Please contact your student services team at your Educational establishment to find out what support is available.

You will be entitled to student discount for tickets on some bus services. More details of how to purchase these tickets can be found in Section 8 of this document.

16+ students with an Education, Health and Care Plan attending school, college or work based learning

SEN students who are transferring onto further education and have an Education Health Care (EHC) Plan, should in the first instance, contact their student services team at their Educational establishment to find out what support is available.

Young people will be entitled to student discount for tickets on some bus services. More details of how to purchase these tickets can be found in Section 8 of this document.

The Local Authority may also consider the direct provision of travel assistance if the students' needs are such that it inhibits their ability to walk to and from their place of learning or they are unable to access public transport. Parents or carers can apply for travel assistance through the Council by contacting SENMAS who will consider the application in accordance with Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Travel Assistance policy.

SEN learners, like mainstream learners, will need to attend their nearest school or college offering the learning or courses required in order to be eligible to receive travel assistance.

The Local Authority will assess the young person's application and if they are considered to have exceptional need and therefore eligible to receive travel assistance, there are several options that can be considered including:

1. Independent Travel Training, (with the school/college's recommendation and the parents' approval)
2. A Personal Travel Assistance Budget.
3. Provision of a space on designated transport for the school/college.

For more information please contact SEN Monitoring & Assessment. Contact details will be found towards the end of this document.

SECTION 5

Frequently asked questions

When do I need to apply for Travel Assistance?

Where parents apply for travel assistance to start in a new academic year, the application form for a child attending a mainstream school needs to be received no later than 31st July to guarantee that the assistance is in place for the child on the first day of term.

Due to the specialist nature of commissioning SEN transport, for children attending a special school, the application form needs to be received no later than 31st May.

Where applications are received after these dates, whilst every effort will be made to put travel assistance in place for a child for the first day of term, this cannot be guaranteed. Until travel assistance is in place, it will be the parent's/carer's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their child to attend school

Can I get Travel assistance to any school of my preference?

Travel assistance will only be provided to your nearest appropriate school where it is more than the relevant distance from home for the age or abilities of the child. When deciding which is the nearest appropriate school for transport purposes, the Local Authority do not take into account parents' wishes. Where parents name schools outside of their local area, in most cases it will be their responsibility to ensure their children can access their preferred school.

My eldest child gets Travel Assistance, so will my younger one get it too?

Where a younger sibling will attend the same school as an older sibling, who currently receives travel assistance, the younger sibling will not necessarily receive travel assistance just because the older one does. Each child is assessed in accordance with Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Travel Assistance Policy on an individual basis.

My child has some lessons off-site at another school. Can we have transport to both?

Travel assistance is only granted to one school. Any travel assistance to an additional off site provision or school, is the responsibility of the parent or the school where the child is on roll.

I have moved address but want my child to remain at their current school. Can we have travel assistance as the school is now further away from home?

Usually moving further away does not automatically entitle your child to travel assistance. If your child's current school is not deemed as your nearest appropriate school to the new home, your child may not be eligible to receive travel assistance. It will remain the parents' responsibility to make their own arrangements to transport their children to and from school, until any new travel assistance is in place and confirmed or if travel assistance is refused.

My child has an Education, Health and Care Plan. Can they have transport to school?

There is no guarantee that a child or young person who receives an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan will receive travel assistance. All children and young people will be assessed in accordance with Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Travel Assistance Policy, regardless of whether they hold an EHC Plan or not. Parents who believe their child may be entitled to travel assistance will need to make an application. Parents should contact SENMAS for more information. The contact details are at the end of this booklet.

I do not like the bus. Can my child have a taxi?

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has the responsibility to ensure the best use of resources on behalf of the residents and Council Tax payers of the City. Although the views of parents and young people will be considered, the routes and types of travel assistance offered are determined by the Council. They will determine the mode of transport that delivers the best value for money for Stoke-on-Trent tax payers, taking into account any special arrangements needed to support the child's particular needs.

I am not sure whether my child would be entitled to travel assistance. What should I do?

Parents and carers should first read through the information given in Section 1 of this document. If you have done this and are still unsure whether your child may be eligible for assistance, please call the relevant Council team to discuss the position. (Admissions for a Mainstream school child or young person or SENMAS for a child or young person with an EHC Plan). They will advise you whether you may be eligible. Contact details are at the end of this document.

My child is going to College now and had a free bus pass whilst at school. Can I get a free Post 16 bus pass?

No free bus passes are offered at Post 16 level. If the family are on low income your child may be eligible for a bursary offered through their college. This is offered with the intention to assist with college expenses including transport to and from college. You should speak to the Student Services team your child's college to find out about what help is available.

My child has lost their bus pass. How do I get a replacement?

You will need to contact the team who issued the pass. There is a charge of £10 which can be paid over the phone with a credit/debit card. The replacement pass can either be sent to your home address or school/college, whichever you prefer. For Mainstream and Post 16 students please contact Admissions. For SEN and Post 16 SEN please contact SENMAS. Contact numbers are at the end of this booklet.

SECTION 6

Appeals and Complaints

What is the difference between a complaint and an appeal?

Usually complaints arise when you are unhappy about something. You may feel you have not been dealt with properly, that information given to you was incorrect or that there has been an unacceptable delay. For these sorts of issues, please follow the complaints procedure.

With an appeal, you may be perfectly happy with the way that you have been treated but feel that the wrong decision has been made and would like it re-examined. For these issues, please follow the Appeals procedure.

Home to school transport appeals

Parents are entitled to appeal against decisions by the Local Authority refusing their application for free or subsidised travel assistance for their child to a school maintained by Stoke-on-Trent City Council or to an Academy or Free School in Stoke-on-Trent.

Parents may also use the appeal process against a decision to withdraw travel assistance for their child.

Procedure

Parents have 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's home to school transport decision to apply for a review of the decision.

Parents should request the Appeals form from Admissions for a Mainstream school child or SENMAS for a child or young person with an EHC Plan. This form can be emailed to them or sent by post.

Parents should complete the form, including why the parent believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed. The completed form should be returned to the office who issued it.

Grounds for appealing

Parents may wish to challenge a decision about:

- the transport arrangements offered;
- their child's eligibility;
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances; and
- the safety of the route.

Stage One: Review by a senior case work officer

Within 20 working days of receipt of the parent's application form a senior case work officer will review the original decision and send the parent a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review. The notification will set out:

- the nature of the decision reached;
- how the review was conducted
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process;
- what factors were considered;
- the rationale for the decision reached; and information about how the parent can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate).

Stage Two: Review by an independent appeal panel

Parents have 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two. Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents request an independent appeal panel considers written representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case and gives a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days). The notification will set out:

- the nature of the decision reached;
- how the review was conducted;
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process;
- what factors were considered;
- the rationale for the decision reached; and
- information about the parent's right to put the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (see below).

The independent appeal panel members will be independent of the original decision making process (but are not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced (at the discretion of the local authority), to ensure a balance is achieved between meeting the needs of the parents and the local authority, and that road safety requirements are complied with and no child is placed at unnecessary risk.

Local Government Ombudsman

There is a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, where a complainant considers that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled. If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply for judicial review.

Complaints

If you feel we have given you a poor service tell the member of staff or their manager as this can often be the quickest way of sorting things out. They will not treat your comments as a formal complaint unless you ask them to, but they will use your comments and take appropriate action, or give you information.

The aim of the complaints system is to resolve problems quickly, as near as possible to the point they arise and by the members of staff closest to the difficulty. Any a child or young person, parent or carer wishing to make a complaint regarding Home to School Transport should contact the relevant team in the first instance.

Therefore complaints relating to Mainstream and Mainstream Post 16 home to school travel should initially be referred to Admissions, and complaints relating to home to school travel for a child or young person with an EHC Plan should be referred to SENMAS.

Complaints or concerns about current bus or taxi arrangements, should be referred to the Safe and Sustainable Transport team. Contact details for all of these are at the back of this booklet.

If you do not want to do this or are unhappy with the response you get, you can make a formal complaint.

How to complain

Stage 1

You can make a complaint either in person, by phone, in writing or by email. Or, you can fill in the Customer Feedback Form online. Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within two working days and you will be given information about who is dealing with your complaint. We aim to respond to you within 10 working days. If the complaint is more complicated we may take longer to sort it out but we will keep you informed.

Stage 2

If you are still not happy, you can ask to have the matter investigated by an independent investigator within the council. You need to request this within 10 working days of receiving your Stage 1 complaint response. This review will be conducted by a Complaint Investigation Officer together with a senior manager not involved in the original complaint. We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days and reach a decision within 20 working days. To request a Stage 2, please outline **in writing** the reasons why you are still dissatisfied and the outcome you require. This should be sent to the Customer Feedback Team, at the address below.

The full complaints process can be accessed at <https://www.stoke.gov.uk> and search for Comment on a Council Service.

You can make your complaint direct from the website or by contacting:

Customer feedback team

Floor two, Civic Centre,
Glebe Street,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1HH

Email: customer.feedback@stoke.gov.uk

Phone: Customer Access 01782 234234

SECTION 7

Transport related responsibilities

Parents' responsibilities

At all times parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and for doing all that is reasonably practicable to bring about their child's attendance.

As a minimum, parents are expected to:

1. Ensure that the school and the local authority have your up-to-date contact details, including any mobile phone number, and any emergency contact details.
2. Make sure that your child is ready five minutes before a pick-up whether at home or from a pick up point. Please be aware that if your child is late for the pick-up and the driver has already left, it will be your responsibility to get the child to school.
3. Always be at home or the drop-off point to meet your child, or make arrangements for your alternative emergency contact to meet your child on your behalf.
4. Ensure that your child is aware of appropriate behaviour whilst travelling to and from school.
5. Make your own transport arrangements should your child:
 - finish school before the normal departure time
 - be taken ill at school and require to return home early
 - be unable to travel at the normal time, for example due to detention or exclusion
 - attend breakfast clubs or after school clubs
 - be on work experience.
6. Make your own transport arrangements if a visiting relative or foreign student stays with the family and attends school with your child.
7. Ensure sufficient notice is provided to the relevant council team to reassess your child's eligibility to receive travel assistance if the family move home or child changes schools.
8. Make your own transport arrangements if the family should move or the child change schools, until the reassessment of your child's eligibility has been undertaken by the council.
9. If advised that your child will be travelling by taxi, when informed which company will be collecting / dropping off your child, contact the operator to confirm the necessary arrangements.
10. Provide suitable child seats or other safety equipment for the age and abilities of their child. It is recommended that you speak to your taxi or minibus operator before purchasing this equipment, to confirm what equipment will be required. (Operators will provide standard seat belts and suitable restraints for wheelchairs and wheelchair users.)

11. Notify the Safe and Sustainable Transport team if your child is going to be absent from school for more than one school day, whether for sickness, holiday or other reason.

If the child is eligible to receive travel assistance, parents are reminded that they are responsible for making their own arrangements until such time as the details of the assistance are confirmed.

Parents/ Carers Not at Home

Where transport is provided, it is expected that a parent or suitable adult will be at the home address or other designated drop-off point to receive the young person from the vehicle.

If the Parent or Guardian is not at home or the drop-off point the driver may take the child back to school or to another appropriate place of safety as agreed with the Social Care team.

The Council reserves the right to pass on any additional costs incurred to the parents. All incidents will be recorded and considered by the relevant transport teams. In the event of frequent repeated incidents, travel assistance may be suspended or withdrawn, pending re-assessment. Information may also be shared with social care for safeguarding reasons.

Code of Conduct for a child or young person when travelling

There is a responsibility on all young people to behave appropriately whilst travelling. Where any behaviour falls short of the required standards, the Council has mechanisms to work with parents, school and transport providers to rectify problems and it retains the right to suspend or remove transport or passes where this is deemed appropriate.

It is the responsibility of young people to:

- Arrive for their transport in good time and with a valid travel pass for travel if one is issued
- Behave in a safe and responsible way at all times
- Get on the correct vehicle, or the first one for which they have a valid pass if issued
- Show any passes to the driver or other officials when asked
- Follow all instructions from the driver, inspector or other official at all times especially in an emergency
- Wear seatbelts at all times where these are provided, and □ Get off safely at the right stop and cross roads carefully.

Children and young people with special educational needs are still expected to behave in a safe and appropriate manner whilst on transport. The Council will work with schools, parents and the child to help manage behaviours to ensure the ongoing safety and comfort of all passengers and drivers and passenger assistants.

The following behaviour is not acceptable and if reported, parents will be contacted by the Local Authority as to the action that will be taken. Sanctions may include confiscation of any passes, suspension or withdrawal of transport and you (and your parents) may have to pay for any damage caused.

Nuisance or offensive behaviour

(Category 1)

This includes irritating and unpleasant behaviour which, whilst not necessarily a threat to safety, may impair the comfort of others. Such behaviour includes:

- Failing to respond to the driver or passenger assistant appropriately
- Failing to show a valid travel pass (if issued) on request of a driver or inspector
- Eating or drinking on the vehicle
- Smoking
- Spitting
- Using bad or abusive language
- Making excessive noise
- Placing feet on the seats of the vehicle

Dangerous behaviour

(Category 2)

This includes behaviour which may present some potential or actual threat to the physical safety of the child and others and includes:

- Standing on the vehicle steps or in the doorway
- Leaning out of the window or door
- Harassing or verbally abusing other passengers or the driver or passenger assistant
- Bullying, including the use of language which is threatening or abusive, and is intended to harass, alarm, or distress someone
- Running around inside the vehicle or climbing on the seats
- Failing or refusing to wear a seat belt (if fitted)

Destructive or very dangerous behaviour

(Category 3)

This category includes behaviour which causes or has the potential to cause physical injury to others and damage to the vehicle and includes:

- Fighting
- Threatening physical violence
- Breaking windows
- interfering with the opening of doors or emergency exits
- Causing damage to seats, seatbelts or other equipment
- Causing graffiti including scratching glass
- Spraying aerosols

Extremely dangerous or life threatening behaviour

(Category 4)

This category includes behaviour which is likely to cause serious injury to others and includes:

- Physical assault on the driver, passenger assistant or other passengers
- Lighting fires including igniting aerosols
- Threatening physical violence with a dangerous weapon
- Interfering with the vehicle controls.

Any person behaving in an inappropriate or dangerous manner will be reported and their parents will be contacted by the Local Authority as to the action that will be taken.

Bullying, including the use of hate speech, will not be tolerated and will be reported to parents and school. Any child or young person found to be bullying or intimidating others will have their transport withdrawn.

Section 8

Travel assistance Options Explained

Personal Travel Assistance Budgets

A Personal Travel Assistance Budget (PTAB) is money to help you get your child to school. You may be eligible for a PTAB for children with an EHC Plan and who have also been assessed as eligible to receive home to school travel assistance. It is granted at the discretion of the Local Authority, and will therefore not automatically be given.

The PTAB is a payment designed to help parents make any arrangements needed, and can be used in any way to facilitate their child's access to school. It is usually paid pro-rata over 11 months directly in to a parent's bank account. It is based on the distance between your home and your child's school and bears no relationship to the cost of a taxi or hired vehicle.

The Council reserves the right to withdraw payment of a PTAB where the attendance of the child at school is not satisfactory, or where they have reason to believe that the funding is not being utilised to facilitate the child's attendance.

Independent travel training

Independent travel training helps young people with special educational needs to travel independently to school or college. Being able to access public transport provides important life skills for students. It will help students make their own decisions about how they live and what they want to achieve, develop an important skill for life and open up educational, social and employment opportunities.

Young people are trained to travel safely from home to school/college and from school/college to home therefore promoting their independence. The training aims to provide the skills and knowledge that is needed to be able to complete journeys safely, confidently and successfully. Once the young person has successfully completed travel training, the expectation is that they will want to utilise these new skills to travel more independently to school or college.

The Stoke-on-Trent Travel Training Programme is a City wide initiative which has been supported by 26 agencies all with a vested interest in their pupils, students, services users, clients and patients. This programme is delivered through the Special Schools and Specialist Colleges in Stoke-on-Trent; it is available to all young people from Year 9 onward irrespective of their degree of ability.

The Travel Log; including more information is available on the website www.sottp.org.uk or contact SENMAS for a referral.

Other ways to get to school or college

The Safe and Sustainable Transport Team at Stoke-on-Trent City Council are working with schools to change habits and encourage more children and families to choose active travel for their journeys to and from school.

We have a statutory duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote sustainable travel to school.

Using some of the ideas explained below, parents and their children can help to tackle congestion on the school-run and help to create a cleaner, greener, healthier school and community

Walk to school

Walking to school contributes to the recommended daily physical activity for you and your children. It also helps to reduce congestion, improves air quality and teaches children valuable road safety skills.

The Safe & Sustainable Transport Team have TravelWise maps showing 10 minute walking zones for every primary and secondary school in the City or why not speak to your school about setting up a **walking bus**. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school or as structured as a route with set meeting points, a timetable and a regularly rotated schedule of trained volunteers.

Cycle or Scoot to school

If you live a little bit further away and can't walk to school, why not think about cycling or scooting? Parents can cycle or scoot with their children too. There are over 160 km of surfaced cycle routes in Stoke-on-Trent of which 80km are off road and utilise greenways, canal towpaths and river paths, away from traffic. Many schools have been assisted in upgrading their facilities for children and young people who wish to cycle or scoot to school, including providing secure cycle shelters and scooterpods.

The Bicycle Train

Is a variation on the walking school bus, in which adults supervise groups of children riding their bikes to school. Like the walking bus it is volunteer led, and can be as informal or structured as you want or need it to be.

Public Transport

Buses and trains may prove to be a good option for some children and young people. Many of our secondary schools are well served by the local bus network. Using public transport will give young people life skills and responsibility. Parents may need to practise the journey with them before letting them travel alone.

Use <http://www.travelinemidlands.co.uk> to plan your journey or look at First Group website for details of services to each school.

Discounted Bus Tickets

All young people aged between 5 and 15 are entitled to reduced cost travel on First Buses. If you are aged 15 and under, but look older, you can pick up a free proof of age card from First Bus travel shops.

If you are over 16 and in full time education you are entitled to First Bus student ticket discounts – you can see the tickets available at <https://www.firstgroup.com/potteries> and go to the Tickets page. You will need to show student ID to buy and use student tickets. If you don't have student ID, please speak to your school, college or education provider.

Student Smart tickets

The Smart multi-operator bus pass allows you to travel on buses provided by different operators across North Staffordshire with just one ticket.

You can travel with any of the bus operators listed below, on any bus route, at any time of day across Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and North Staffordshire within the boundaries of the scheme.

Smart tickets cannot be used to travel to or from areas outside of the boundary, but you can use it to travel up to the boundary and pay the additional fare to your final destination.

Smart tickets are valid on the following bus operators' services:

- First
- D&G
- Scraggs
- Arriva Midlands
- Stanton's of Stoke

Weekly, monthly, and three-month tickets are available.

Tickets can be bought from the college travel office if you are studying at:

- Stoke-on-Trent College
- Newcastle-under-Lyme College
- Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College
- Staffordshire University
- Keele University

If you study at a 6th form or university not listed above, you can buy a Student Smart ticket from one of the following locations when you show your student identification:

- One Smithfield, Hanley
- Bentilee Neighbourhood Centre
- Stoke One-Stop Shop
- Tunstall Local Centre

You can also buy daily and weekly tickets on the bus from the driver (30-day and 90day passes cannot be bought on the bus).

If you don't have student ID, please speak to your school, college or education provider.

For more information about the Student Smart Ticket, including where the boundaries are, go to <https://www.stoke.gov.uk> and search for smart bus ticket.

Other operators may have alternative ticket ranges available and you should check with them directly.

Car sharing

Parents can reduce the cost and time involved in the school-run by sharing cars with friends and neighbours. Ask your chosen school if they can introduce you to other parents travelling from the same area. If half of UK motorists received a lift one day a week, congestion and pollution would be reduced by 10%.

Park & Stride

In order to reduce the congestion and pollution caused by parents dropping off and picking up their children at the school gates, many schools are introducing a Park & Stride scheme. Park & Stride simply means driving some of the way to school, parking away from the school entrance and walking the rest of the way. Park & Stride is particularly good for families that live too far from the school to comfortably walk the whole way. It has the added benefit of reducing congestion around the school entrance, making it safer for children to enter their school. Some schools have entered into arrangements with local businesses to allow short term parking in nearby private car parks for this purpose.

Responsible parking

Inconsiderate parking and manoeuvring in the vicinity of school entrances can present a significant safety hazard. Parents should support their school, other road users and local residents by avoiding parking on 'School Keep-Clear' and other road markings and, where possible, park or drop-off a safe distance from the school and encourage their child to walk the last bit of the way to the school gates.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Civil Enforcement Team will work with schools and Local Policing Units to take action against inconsiderate and dangerous parking.

Useful Contacts

Websites for information and bus tickets:

<https://www.stoke.gov.uk>

<http://www.travelinemidlands.co.uk>

<https://www.firstgroup.com/potteries> <http://www.dgbus.co.uk>

SENDIASS

(Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Service)

SENDIASS provides confidential, impartial, free, high quality information, advice and support to children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN); children and young people with disabilities; and their parents.

SENDIASS

Pinewood Crescent

Meir

Stoke-on-Trent

ST3 6HZ

Tel: **(01782) 234701 or 234847**

E-mail: iass@stoke.gov.uk

Website: www.sendiass-stoke.co.uk

The SEND Information Advice and Support Service Helpline is available: Monday - Friday: 10am to 3pm. An answerphone service is available outside of these hours.

Admissions:

Email: admissions@stoke.gov.uk Phone:

01782 234598

SEN Monitoring & Assessment (SENMAS):

E mail: SENMAS@stoke.gov.uk

Phone: **01782 231863**

Safe and Sustainable Transport:

E mail: tracs.sp@stoke.gov.uk

Phone: 01782 232066

Stoke-on-Trent City Council:

Civic Centre

Glebe Street

Stoke-on-Trent

ST4 1HH

Website: <https://www.stoke.gov.uk>

Local Offer: <http://localoffer>

All information within the Local Offer section is here to support families of children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability (SEND).