

# SEND



## A guide to education travel assistance 2016-17

---

Co-produced with  
Family Voice Surrey

Surrey County Council offers travel assistance to parents and carers of children and young people with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP) aged up to 25 years.

This guide is to help parents, carers and young people navigate the system and understand their eligibility, and how to get the SEND travel assistance they need. On page 3 is a detailed diagram or flow chart showing the different factors that affect an application for travel assistance.

The council assesses eligibility for travel assistance following two principles:

1. A child or young person's individual needs determines the support they are given, and evidence is taken from a range of professionals and their parents and/or carers.
2. Children and young people are assessed on an individual basis and any decision is based on their individual needs.

At the start of the statutory process for an EHCP, a SEND Case Worker is allocated who will support this process. They will advise you on the travel assistance policy and how it applies to your circumstances and the options available.

Once the plan is in place, the travel assistance is reviewed as part of the annual EHCP review conversation. When a child is in Year 9, their annual review is about preparing for adulthood and, where appropriate, planning for independent travel.

There may be more frequent reviews depending on circumstances, such as exceptional needs. Exceptional needs might include, but are not limited to, the following: health needs, disability, circumstances affecting the child's sibling(s) or other close family members who are dependent upon the child's parents/carers, exceptional financial difficulties and/or other factors that are likely to significantly impact on the parents'/carers' ability to

transport their child to and from their education provider.

Any young person whose disability affects their ability to travel safely will be eligible for travel assistance. But there are circumstances where a child or young person is not eligible for travel assistance. These are usually where:

- a young person's additional needs do not affect their mobility or safety while travelling, in which case standard eligibility criteria based on distance alone will apply;
- or where you have chosen provision for your child that is further away from home than alternative suitable provision closer to home, in which case you will be responsible for meeting the additional travel costs.

We recognise that many parents and carers would like to take their children to school themselves. If you are eligible for travel assistance, we offer a travel allowance to enable you

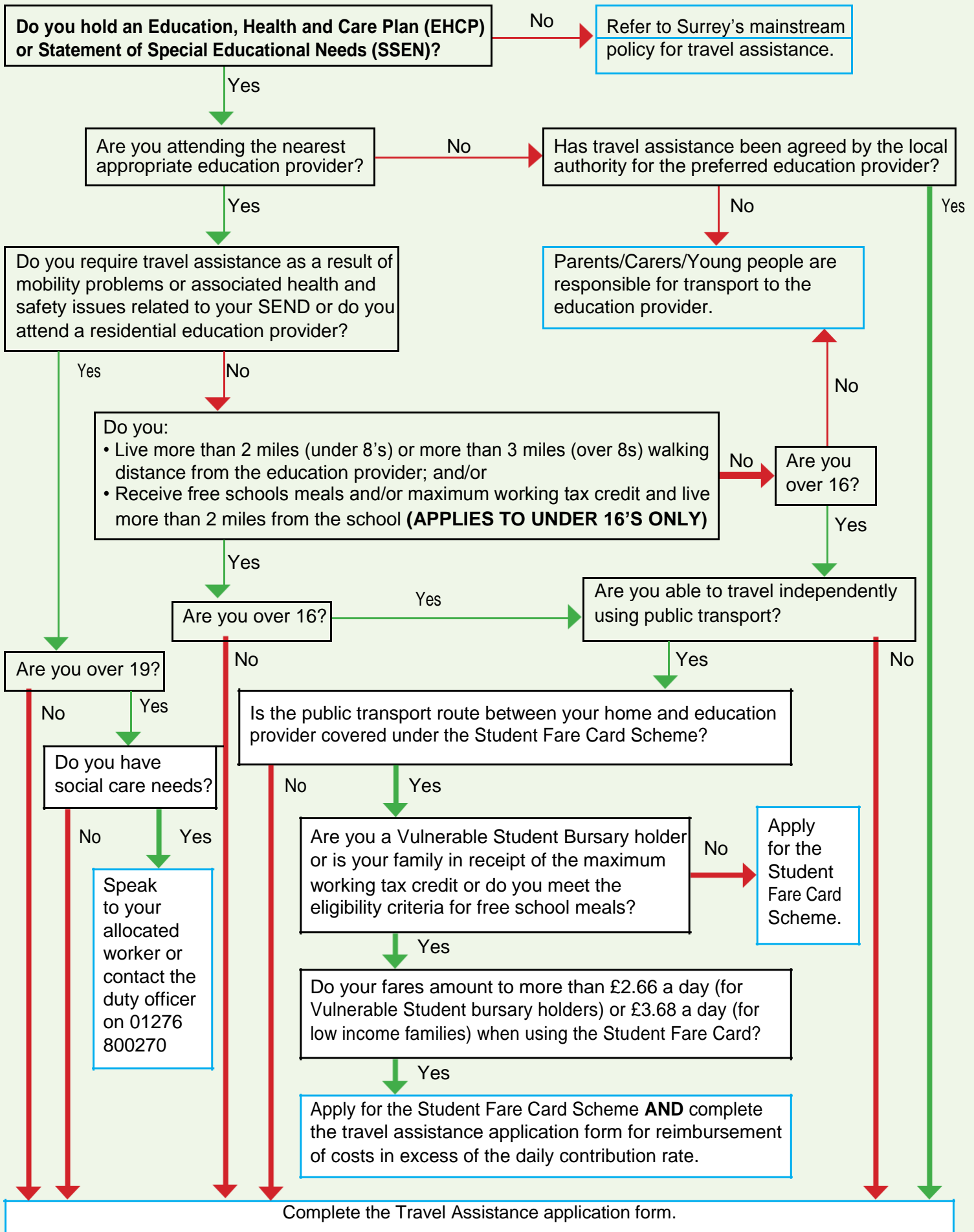
to do this and benefit from the flexibility this offers for your circumstances. Alternatively, we offer options for independent travelling and for contracted transport, where independent travel is not possible.

## 16-18 contribution to travel

If a young person is going into the Sixth Form at a school or a college and they are eligible for travel assistance, then a contribution to travel costs is charged each term. The contribution is capped at £3.68\* a day, and applies to all forms of travel assistance.

(\*2016-17 charge. This charge will increase in line with inflation for 2017-18).

# Application for travel assistance - flow chart



If your child qualifies for travel assistance, your SEND case worker will request that the council's Transport Coordination Centre (TCC) makes the appropriate travel arrangements. This could be either a parental travel allowance or a pass for public transport (if applicable) or suitable contracted transport, eg coach, minibus or taxi.

## 1. Travel Allowance

A travel allowance is a flexible option available to children or young people who are eligible for travel assistance. It is ideal for parents and carers who wish to take their own child or young person to school or college.

### How much could I get?

The amount is calculated based on the home to school/college mileage via the shortest viable road route. We pay 45p per mile, each way, per day. So if your child or young person has a home to school journey of 15 miles each way, the calculation would be:

**15 miles x 2 journeys x 45p x 190 days = £2,565**

**Travel allowance  
£256.50 per month**

Once the allowance is agreed, you'll receive a letter confirming the annual sum. This is then paid in equal monthly instalments from October to July. Attendance is checked each term, and as long as attendance stays above 80%, the amount paid stays the same. The allowance is subject to the 16-18 contribution to travel for young people going into Sixth Form at school or college.

## 2. Public transport - independent travelling

Our desire is for our young people to become more independent travellers and we have a range of options to provide support for children and young people to travel independently on public transport (subject to eligibility).

Children and young people requiring travel assistance who are able to travel independently using public transport may benefit from one of the following schemes (subject to eligibility):

### Up to age 16

- Free bus or train pass
- Seat on a school coach
- Reimbursement of the cost of the lowest equivalent public transport rate where a Surrey pass is not appropriate.

### Post-16

- **Disabled Person's Bus Pass** – free travel is available on all buses in the country but there may be variations in the offer available in different authorities. Surrey provides the additional concession of free travel at any time, however the national minimum is 9.30am - 11pm Monday to Friday, and all times at weekends and public holidays.
- **Disabled Person's Rail Card** – this card costs £20 and will entitle you to a third off. Visit [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk) for more information.

- **Student Fare Card Scheme** – for the cost of £25 for a train or bus, 16-18 year old Surrey students in full-time education receive the following discounts:
  - **Bus** - travel on Surrey buses for the under 16s fare.
  - **Train** - season tickets can be purchased at one-third of the full adult rate.

Students using a Student Fare Card who receive a Vulnerable Student Bursary or are from a low income family can access additional financial support, claiming reimbursement where their daily costs exceed Surrey's contribution rate.

Where a student is unable to use a Student Fare Card or Disabled Person's Bus Pass because either they are not eligible for a pass or the public transport route is not eligible, they may claim reimbursement for costs in excess of the contribution rate.

Post-16 students may claim reimbursement where their daily travel costs exceed Surrey's contribution rate (capped at £3.68 per day for 2016-17). Claims can be made by contacting your SEND Case Worker. For post-16 students from families on low incomes, additional financial support is available to ensure that travel costs do not become a barrier to their access to education or training.

## Other sources of financial support for independent travelling

### 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Young people may be able to get a bursary to help with education-related costs, such as transport, by applying directly to their school, college or other education or training provider. There are two types of bursary: **Vulnerable Student Bursary** Up to £1,200 could be available if at least one of the following applies:

- You are in or have recently left local authority care

- You have a disability and receive Income Support in your name
- You have a disability and receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name
- You have a disability and receive Universal Credit in your name

Please note: if in receipt of the VSB your contribution will be £2.66 per day.

You need to be aware that any claim you make as a young person in your name will directly impact on your family's overall entitlement to benefits and eligibility for child tax credits and working tax credits. We recommend you seek advice before deciding which options will work best for your situation. You can receive benefit advice at your local Citizens' Advice Bureau.

### Discretionary Bursary

A discretionary bursary may be available for young people in

need of financial support who do not qualify for a vulnerable student bursary. Your education or training provider decides the amount you receive, based on your individual circumstances, such as family income. You apply to your school, college or education provider for this funding, which can be used to pay for transport.

Please note: if in receipt of this bursary you will contribute £3.68 per day.

### Surrey Young People's Fund

The Surrey Young People's Fund provides grants to young people to enable them to gain access to training and employment. These grants will typically be between £50 and £200 and can fund items directly related to enhancing the young person's employability skills. For more information and to apply, visit: [www.cfsurrey.org.uk/fund/the-surrey-young-peoples-fund/](http://www.cfsurrey.org.uk/fund/the-surrey-young-peoples-fund/)

If you do not qualify for any of the sources of financial support and are unable to afford the

cost of transport to access education, please speak to your SEND Case Worker to apply for other assistance, which may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Independent travel training

The council will be working in partnership with parents to develop independent travel training in 2016-17. Details about this training are still being finalised and will be available on the council's website.

For more information visit [www.surreycc.gov.uk/SENDtransport](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/SENDtransport)

## 3. Council-contracted transport

### What we will do

- Commission travel arrangements as instructed by the SEND team, including any approved special requirements, such as solo travel or with an escort.
- Make suitable travel arrangements within 10

working days of the request being received from the SEND team. At peak times this may take longer and we cannot guarantee that transport will be organised for the start of the school year for any requests received in August.

- Send a letter to you detailing the travel arrangements we have put in place, including the name and contact details of the operator if your child is travelling on a contracted vehicle.
- Contract manage all operators on an ongoing basis by holding monthly meetings/discussions with each operator to review their performance.
- Only use council approved operators where all drivers and escorts are fully vetted, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, and receive training necessary to manage medical conditions before the issue of a TCC Authorised Identity Badge.

driver or any of the passengers in the vehicle is compromised, we may withdraw transport for a fixed period while we will work with you, and other professionals as necessary, to find a suitable solution.

### **What we are not able to do**

- Allow transport operators to make additional journeys at your request – operators can only take passengers from home to school and school to home.
- Plan our routes and allocate pick-up and drop-off times taking into account specific family daily commitments.
- Guarantee that transport arrangements will not change during your child's time at school.
- Allow your child to eat or drink in the vehicle, unless the need to do so is a requirement to manage the child or young person's medical condition, and this is made clear at the time of your application.

### **What you need to do**

- Ensure any information relating to your child's needs is shared with the SEND case worker when requesting travel assistance so that appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure the safety of the driver and child or children in the vehicle.
- Take your child to meet the vehicle at the start of the day and collect them from the vehicle on the return home.
- Be responsible for getting your child to school during any period of exclusion from transport.
- Work with us to find appropriate solutions where issues have arisen.
- Be aware that operators may charge for any additional costs incurred through deliberate damage of the vehicle as a result of your child's use of the transport.
- Inform us of any concerns you have about your child's transport – these will be investigated and recorded, and we will confirm with you that you are happy with the resolution.

## **How can I appeal a decision about travel assistance?**

Where parents and carers disagree with a decision that has been made about a child or young person's eligibility for travel assistance, or are unhappy with changes or other aspects of transport arrangements, they may ask for the decision to be reconsidered, to include any exceptional circumstances they wish to put forward.

A form will be provided for this purpose and supplementary evidence may be requested.

If you would like a decision to be reconsidered, contact your SEND Case Worker who will advise on the appeals procedure.

Please note: if circumstances arise where the safety of the

# Further information

There are a number of ways you can get more information:  
Your SEND Case Worker  
(About matters relating to eligibility, travel allowance and changes in circumstances)

## **Your Area Special Educational Needs Teams** (see contact details below)

South East SEN 01737  
737990  
sesen@surreycc.gov.uk

North East SEN 01737  
737940  
nesen@surreycc.gov.uk

North West SEN 01483  
518110  
nwsen@surreycc.gov.uk

South West SEN 01483  
517890  
swsen@surreycc.gov.uk

## **Your school, college or education or training provider.**

## **Surrey's SEND Local Offer website**

(Please note that application forms for travel assistance are available on the SEND Local Offer website)

<https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/kb5/surrey/localoffer/home.page>

## **Surrey SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SIASS) –**

[www.sendadvicesurrey.org.uk](http://www.sendadvicesurrey.org.uk)

## **Surrey County Council's website** [www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk) [www.surreycc.gov.uk/SENDtransport](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/SENDtransport)

## **Who do I contact if I have a query or any issues about the travel assistance I am receiving?**

Travel arrangement queries - Contact Centre t: 0300 200 1004  
e: [contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank