



Transport and School Placement Rights – Who Qualifies and How the Process Works

Children with special educational needs or disabilities may be entitled to free school transport and/or a specialist school placement if their needs cannot be met in their local mainstream school. These rights are protected by law and do not depend on a family's financial situation.

Who Qualifies for Free Home-to-School Transport?

A child may qualify if:

- They cannot reasonably walk to school because of their special educational needs, disability, or medical condition
- The only suitable school is further away than the statutory walking distance
- Their route is unsafe without adult supervision
- They attend a specialist placement named in their EHCP which is not their nearest school

Transport can include taxis, minibuses, personal travel budgets, or reimbursements. The type of transport should reflect the child's needs.

How School Placement Decisions Are Made

When an EHCP is issued or reviewed, parents can request a specific school. The Local Authority must name that school unless:

- The school is unsuitable for the child's age, ability or needs
- The placement would be an inefficient use of public funds
- The placement would impact the education of other pupils

The Local Authority must also consider whether the child can reasonably attend a nearer suitable school.

Nearest Suitable School – What It Means

"Nearest" does not simply mean geographically closest. It means the nearest school that can actually meet the child's needs. If a closer school cannot provide the right support, the Local Authority may need to name a further one.

Requesting Transport or Placement Support

1. Gather evidence of your child's needs and how they affect travel or access to school
2. Submit a written request to the Local Authority (or through the EHCP process)
3. Ask for a review if circumstances change

If Your Request Is Refused

You can:

- Ask for the decision and reasoning in writing
- Request a review or appeal
- Use mediation or tribunal routes for placement decisions
- Seek support from advocacy or SENDIASS services

Key Points to Remember

- Transport entitlement is based on need, not family income
- A child does not need an EHCP to qualify for transport if they meet disability criteria
- Placement rights are linked to what is suitable, not simply what is local

