

# Transport to and from school

*“It is important that Local Education Authorities recognise that some parents will require assistance if they are to fulfil their responsibility to ensure their children attend school each day. Such assistance should be provided in ways that support rather than undermine parents’ involvement in their children’s education.”<sup>1</sup>*

## Who is this chapter for?

- School lead or school staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school
- Attendance officer
- Home school liaison officer
- Parent support adviser
- Safeguarding officer
- Education welfare service

## This chapter will support schools to:

- inform parents with disabilities about getting support with transport to school.

## Synopsis

Family circumstances can make transport to and from school difficult and so young carers may often be late to school or even miss it altogether.

The implementation of the *Disability Discrimination Act 2005* means that local authorities must provide adequate support to parents with disabilities who need support in getting their children to school.

## Why might a young carer have difficulty in getting to school?

There are several reasons why young carers may have transport problems in getting to school:

- A parent may be unwell and therefore unable to transport their child to school.
- Another family member, perhaps a sibling, may be unwell or need to attend an appointment.
- An older young carer may be responsible for escorting a younger sibling when a parent is unable to due to their illness or disability.

It is important to be mindful that a family’s needs can change and parents with episodic illnesses may find transport difficult at times when they are unwell.



## Providing transport support

Having a disability or illness can result in great difficulties for parents in getting their children to and from school and thereby fulfilling their responsibility to ensure their children attend and engage with school. Currently, only families who live beyond “walking distance” from school – two miles for children under eight and three miles for those over eight – are automatically provided with free transport, but local authorities and county councils can give help to families who live within “walking distance” if the family is in “special circumstances”. The *Disability Discrimination Act 2005* makes such help mandatory for some disabled parents.<sup>2</sup>

The *Disability Discrimination Act 2005* has placed a duty on the public sector to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities and to eliminate discrimination. Local authorities are, therefore, obligated to amend their home to school transport policy if, for example, that policy relied on parents with disabilities accompanying their children along a walking route for it to be considered safe, and where the parents’ disability prevented them from doing so. In such circumstances, a reasonable adjustment would be for the local authority to provide free home to school transport for the children of disabled parents.<sup>3</sup> This applies even if the disability, for example MS or mental ill-health, does not affect the parent every day.

Some parents may choose to use their direct payments in order to buy assistance that would allow them to support their child in getting to school by themselves. Direct payments are cash payments made to individuals who have been assessed as needing services, in lieu of social service provisions.

## Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 5** Attendance
- 8** Transport to and from school
- 27** Crisis or emergency plans
- 28** Support for the whole family: signposting, referrals and partnership work

## Key resources

### → Home to school travel and transport guidance

Developed by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

<http://static.carers.org/files/dfes-home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance-3108.pdf>

### → Effective attendance practice in schools: an overview

Developed by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=13959](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=13959)

### → Advice to Schools and Local authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance

Developed by the Department for Education and Skills for groups of people at particular risk.

[www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance)



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<sup>1</sup>Morris, J. (2004). *Disabled parents and schools: Barriers to parental involvement in children's education*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation: [www.jrf.org.uk/publications/disabled-parents-and-schools-barriers-parental-involvement-childrens-education](http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/disabled-parents-and-schools-barriers-parental-involvement-childrens-education)

<sup>2</sup>[www.carers.org/professionals/young-carers/articles/school-transport,3091,PR.html](http://www.carers.org/professionals/young-carers/articles/school-transport,3091,PR.html)

<sup>3</sup>Department for Children, Schools and Families. *Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance*: <http://static.carers.org/files/dfes-home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance-3108.pdf>