



School Transport for children and young people with Special Educational Needs

Eligibility

The [School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs \(pdf\)](#) supports the transport to and from school of children and young people with special educational needs in line with the criteria set out in the Department of Education and Youth.

To be eligible for school transport under the above Scheme;

- (i) The required professional report(s) submitted must meet the Department of Education and Youth criteria for attending the relevant setting and
- (ii) the child/young person must be attending the nearest recognised mainstream school or special class/special school, or a unit which can be resourced to meet their special educational needs

Application process

Applications are made by the parent/guardian to the school principal using the application form. The principal will forward the application to the school's [Special Educational Needs Organiser \(SENO\)](#).

The closing date to apply for school transport is the end of April each year, however the Department of Education and Youth accepts applications for school transport for children/young people with special educational needs all year round. It is important that applications are submitted as early as possible.

When a child/young person is changing home address and/or school, and still requires school transport, a new application must be completed by the family and the school principal, who will then forward to the SENO.



Timeline for transport

On receipt of an application, the SENO is required to confirm that the criteria for the provision of school transport are met.

Once the SENO has completed their section of the form, they will forward it to the School Transport Section of the Department of Education and Youth for consideration.

When the application has been processed by School Transport Section and it has been confirmed that the child/young person is eligible for transport, their details are submitted to Bus Éireann who operate the school transport scheme on behalf of the Department. Bus Éireann will then advise what transport options may be available.

In some cases, the SENO may advise that the child/young person does not meet the criteria under the terms of the Scheme, and the Department will engage with the family in these cases.

Eligible children and young people are catered for as follows;

- In cases where Bus Éireann advise that there is a seat available for a child or young person on an existing service, transport arrangements will be put in place at the earliest opportunity and a member of Bus Éireann staff will contact the family member named on the application form to advise the start date of the service.
- where Bus Éireann have identified that there is no service available to accommodate a child or young person, or if their care needs are such that they cannot avail of a school transport service, a Special Transport Grant (STG) is offered to families.



- where families cannot avail of the Special Transport Grant, or where they require an individual service, Bus Éireann will endeavor to establish a new service.
- Where a new service is sanctioned, this will require that a procurement and vetting process is followed, and sometimes the school may also need to employ a school transport escort. Procurement of a school transport service and the recruitment of a school transport escort can take several weeks to put in place. This is the reason a school should submit their applications as soon as possible to the SENO to prevent delays in the application process.

Tickets

Where families apply during the school year for transport and the child/young person is deemed eligible, Bus Éireann will issue tickets for services as soon as possible after transport has been arranged.

Where families apply before the end of April for the following school year, Bus Éireann will issue tickets from July onwards.

School Transport Escort

There is a facility within the Special Educational Needs Transport Scheme for the appointment of a School Transport Escort where a child's care and safety needs while on school transport are such as to require the support of a School Transport Escort.

The Department provides grant funding directly to the school for the employment of the School Transport Escort and sets the rate of pay. The Board of Management/ETB are responsible for the employment of the School Transport Escort.

A School Principal can seek sanction from the Department of Education and Youth to employ a School Transport Escort to accompany a child/young person on school transport, where supporting evidence provided identifies care and safety needs requiring that support.



Sometimes it can take time for the school to source a suitable person, and this can delay the provision of transport. It is important to note that before funding can be provided, the employment of escorts must be sanctioned by the School Transport Section of the Department. Requests for sanction should be sent to School Transport Section at escort_transport@education.gov.ie

Special Transport Grant

In some circumstances a parent/guardian may be able to receive a Special Transport Grant (STG) toward the cost of private transport arrangements. A school transport application under the scheme must have been made and the child/young person deemed eligible before a Special Transport Grant (STG) can be considered.

Grants are based on the numbers of days the child/young person attends school following the date of application for school transport.

A Special Transport Grant (STG) may be provided to families of eligible children or young people in situations where:

- Bus Éireann is not able to provide a transport service.
- a child's or young person's behavioural difficulties or medical needs are such as to make the provision of a transport service unsuitable.
- an escort is considered necessary, and the provision of such support is not available.
- the cost of establishing/maintaining a service is considered prohibitive.

With effect from the start of the 2024/2025 school year that the rate of the Special Transport Grant has increased as recommended in the review of the School Transport Scheme which was published in February 2024.

The increased rate is 41.80 cent for the 6,437 kilometres travelled and 31.78 cent per kilometre for each kilometre travelled thereafter.



If a parent/guardian cannot accept the grant and require a service, School Transport Section will request the setup of a new service for the child or young person. A Special Transport Grant Return Form confirming this option must be returned to School Transport Section.

To ensure that payments are processed as quickly as possible, the following schedule of payments applies:

Payment	Period of school year covered	Payments will be processed*
Payment 1	September – October inclusive	November
Payment 2	November – February inclusive	March
Payment 3	March – end of school year	End of school year/during the summer months
Otherwise, one payment will be made to cover the full school year during the summer months		

***Note:** Payments can only be processed on this schedule when correctly completed Statement of Attendance forms are returned and parent/guardian submit their bank details. Parents/Guardians can only receive an STG where sanctioned by the Department, and all the information contained above will be in the sanction letter. Grants are subject to review and may be varied or withdrawn where circumstances change.

Special Transport Interim Grant

It is important to note that a school transport service can sometimes take a number of weeks to arrange. Bus Éireann has reported challenges in finding suitable drivers and contractors in some locations. If there is a delay in setting up a service for an eligible child/young person a Special Transport Interim Grant may be available to those families. The grant is based on the number of days a child/young person attends school and is not paid in advance.



The interim grant is offered from the date of application to assist with the cost of private transport arrangements that the family put in place until a transport service is ready to start. Bus Éireann or the School Transport Section in the Department of Education and Youth will inform families how to avail of this grant.

Bus Éireann Call Centre

Families can contact Bus Éireann's customer care call centre during the busy summer period on: LoCall 0818 919 910. Operating hours are 09.00 – 17.00 Monday to Friday. Families can also contact Bus Éireann by submitting a query using the following link: [Bus Éireann: Contact Us](#)

Contact details for School Transport Section

If you have any queries regarding the school transport application process, please contact the School Transport Section customer query portal at <https://cs.education.gov.ie/> or alternative contact details can be found on the webpage below.

Webpage (www.gov.ie): [School transport](#)

School Transport Section

Department of Education and Youth

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