



To: School Management Bodies

Re: School Transport - Applications for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport during the current Covid-19 Period of Restrictions

Dear Management Body,

In light of the evolving situation with COVID-19, and in order to ensure continuity during this period of restrictions for the benefit of children who require Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the Department of Education and Skills (DES) have agreed a temporary process to allow for SEN Transport applications to continue to be submitted at this time. This process is set out below and replaces on a temporary basis the current process which heavily relies on the postal system, with a process whereby applications may be submitted and accepted via email.

The temporary process is as follows:

1. A Word version of the SEN Transport Application form will be made available on both the DES and the NCSE website. The parent/guardian will complete the relevant section of the application form. The parent/guardian is asked to type their name in the signature section. The parent/guardian will email the form and copies of professional report/s to the school. The school will complete the relevant section/s and forward the application form and reports via email to the relevant Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) from an official school email address. (If steps 2, 3 and 4 do not apply, the next step for the school is step 5)

OR – where the parent does not have the facility to complete the form, steps 2, 3 and 4 apply

2. The parent/guardian is asked to email School Transport Section in the DES via a dedicated email address, details of which will be available on the DES and NCSE websites, giving School Transport Section within the DES authorisation to complete the application form on their behalf. They should include in the email all the details that would normally be provided on the relevant section of the application form – name of child, gender, address, eircode, DOB, disability category, etc. There will also be a dedicated phone helpline for parents to contact if they wish to give this detail over the phone to a member of staff in School Transport Section, details of which will also be available of the DES and NCSE websites.
3. School Transport Section will complete the form on the parent/guardian's behalf. When the form is complete, School Transport Section will send it by email to the parent/guardian asking them to confirm that the detail is correct and advise that in confirming that they also understand and confirm agreement to the T&Cs of the scheme and they are aware of why their data is required and how it will be used. The parent /guardian should forward the professional reports to the school for association with the application.

4. Upon receipt of confirmation from the parent, School Transport Section will email the application form to the school and will inform the school that the Section has been authorised to complete the form on behalf of the parent/guardian.
5. The school will complete the relevant section/s of the form and will email it to the relevant SENO from an official school email address. The professional reports should also be forwarded by the school to the SENO. If this is not possible, the report/s should be emailed from the author of the report to the NCSE.
6. Once the application is received by the NCSE, the SENO will contact the parent/guardian, in advance of reviewing the application, to confirm that consent has been given explicitly for the processing of the child's information as part of the application process.
7. The SENO will complete the form, including the report on the recommendation for transport and will forward the application form to School Transport Section for review and a decision on eligibility for transport.
8. The application will be processed in the normal manner by School Transport Section. Communications with Parents/Guardians during this temporary arrangement period will be via email or phone call, using the contact details provided on the application form.

We ask that you please issue this letter to all schools under your aegis. We would also ask that school principals be requested to provide details of the dedicated School Transport Section phone number to parents who may require assistance in making an application – this number is 087-4107037.

If you have any queries in regard to this process please email:
school_transport@education.gov.ie or NCSE-Operations-Unit@NCSE.ie

School Transport Section, Department of Education and Skills

National Council for Special Education

27th April 2020