



LEICESTER THERAPEUTIC SCHOOL

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS THROUGH NURTURE AND MINDSET

Transporting Pupils Policy

Policy Owner	Leicester Therapeutic School
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Safeguarding at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are committed to providing an environment in which students feel safe and secure to access their education. All stakeholders are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff are encouraged to maintain an "it could happen here" attitude. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. Leicester Therapeutic School are dedicated to creating a strong safeguarding culture, and that the safety and well-being of children is the central thread that embeds itself through all aspects of the school. If a person is concerned about anything they read, witness or hear with regards to the school, they should contact the school's designated safeguarding lead immediately or Headteacher. Safeguarding, and the safety and well-being of all pupils at Leicester Therapeutic School is carefully considered and a central theme through all school policies.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are passionate about providing an inclusive education to children with special educational needs. We recognise and celebrate the individuality of our pupils and use personalised approaches, allowing pupils with SEND to feel supported during the school day. We strive to provide pupils with the same opportunities and experiences that pupils would have received at a mainstream school, believing passionately that in the right environment, with the right support, pupils will flourish in education. We do this by focusing on providing a SEND friendly environment, an adapted curriculum and a strong focus on developing pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The special educational needs and disabilities of all pupils at Leicester Therapeutic School is carefully considered and a central theme through all school policies. For more information, please read the school's SEND Information Report.

1. Introduction

Leicester Therapeutic School is an independent specialist school supporting primary-age pupils with SEND and EHC plans. The school does not routinely provide home-to-school transport. Families apply to their home local authority for travel assistance; an EHC plan or living outside the local area does not automatically establish eligibility. This policy covers liaison with transport providers, safe arrival and departure, and exceptional school-authorised journeys.

2. Local authority home-to-school travel duties

Current guidance and law in respect of school transport:

The Education Act 1996 contains the law on school transport. The government has also issued statutory guidance called [Travel to school for children of compulsory school age](#). Local authorities must have regard to this when carrying out their duties on home to school travel and transport and sustainable travel.

- Under [section 508A](#) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities must also promote the use of sustainable travel and transport for all children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education in the local authority's area.
- Under [section 508B](#) and [Schedule 35B](#) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities are under a duty to provide free school transport to "eligible children".
- Under [section 508C](#) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities have a discretionary power to provide travel to school for children resident in their area who are not eligible children.

Who is entitled to free school transport?

The local authority assesses eligibility individually for children of compulsory school age attending a qualifying school. Grounds include distance, route safety, SEND or mobility needs, and extended rights for qualifying low-income families.

- The child is living outside of the statutory walking distance of the nearest suitable qualifying school.
 - The statutory walking distance is two miles for children under eight who are of compulsory school age.
 - For children aged eight and over, the statutory walking distance is three miles.
 - The statutory distance is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied, if necessary, may walk safely.
 - A suitable school is defined as the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and considering any SEN the child may have.
 - A child's home is defined as the place where he/she is habitually and normally resident.
- A child may qualify regardless of distance where SEND, disability or mobility needs mean they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to the nearest suitable school.
 - This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

- The local authority will consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and whether the child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child.
- The child cannot reasonably be expected to walk the route to school because the nature of the route is unsafe to walk
 - The local authority will consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and whether the child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child.
- Extended rights apply to qualifying low-income families under the current national criteria. From September 2026, families should check targeted free school meals eligibility for transport purposes; expanded or universal free school meals alone do not establish extended transport rights.
 - For eligible children aged 8–10, the nearest suitable school is more than two miles away.
 - For eligible children aged 11–16, the school is one of the three nearest suitable schools and is between two and six miles away.
 - For eligible children aged 11–16, the nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief is between two and fifteen miles away.
 - For the above criteria, when assessing whether the child lives 2 miles from the school the route should be measured based on the shortest route a child could be expected to walk safely, accompanied by an adult if necessary (this can include routes which may not be accessible to vehicles, for example a footpath); when deciding if the child lives within the upper 6 or 15 mile limits then the local authority should assess the upper limits based on road routes which would be suitable for a vehicle as the child should not be expected to walk such a distance to get to school.

What is a qualifying school?

A qualifying school, for the purpose of identifying an eligible child, includes:

- community, foundation or voluntary schools
- community or foundation special schools
- non-maintained special schools
- pupil referral units
- maintained nursery schools or
- city technology colleges (CTC), city colleges for the technology of the arts (CCTA) or academies, including free schools and University Technical Colleges (UTC).

An independent school can be a qualifying school where it is named in the child's EHC plan. The local authority must still assess the applicable eligibility criteria and placement circumstances.

What is suitable transport?

To be suitable, the transport must enable an eligible child to reach school without such stress, strain or difficulty that they would be prevented from benefitting from the education provided. It must allow the child to travel in reasonable safety and in reasonable comfort.

DfE guidance gives indicative maximum journey times of 45 minutes for primary-age pupils and 75 minutes for secondary-age pupils, although individual circumstances, including attendance at a more

distant specialist school, may justify longer journeys. Suitability must be assessed for the individual child.

Local authorities should also consider the walking distance to access public transport.

Statutory walking distance

The statutory walking distances are used to determine whether a child is eligible for free travel to school. They are the distance beyond which a child who is attending their nearest suitable school is eligible for free travel arranged by their local authority. Where a child lives within the statutory walking distance (and is not eligible for free travel on any of the other grounds set out in this guidance) the parent is responsible for arranging their child's travel to school. There is no expectation that the child will walk. It is for the parent to determine what arrangements would be suitable for their child.

When a local authority assesses whether the distance between a child's home and their school is further than the statutory walking distance, the route they measure must be the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk in reasonable safety. This is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. The route may also include footpaths, bridleways, other pathways and alternative entrances to the school.

When assessing whether a route can be walked in reasonable safety, local authorities should consider the whole of the route. This will include, for example, any sections that use footpaths or bridleways, as well as sections that use roads. They should consider a range of risks such as canals, rivers, ditches, speed of traffic and fields of vision for the pedestrian and motorist.

How will the transport be provided?

It is for local authorities to decide how they will arrange free travel for an eligible child. The local authority can:

- Agree a mileage allowance or personal travel arrangement with a parent who consents; parents should not be required to accept this instead of suitable arranged travel.
- Fund public transport e.g. through a season ticket
- Provide school buses
- Provide taxis or minibuses
- Provide escorts to walk children to school.

How do I apply for transport?

Local authorities must publish general arrangements and policies on school transport for children of compulsory school age.

Families should apply to their home local authority's school travel team using its current procedure and provide relevant evidence. The school can contribute information about needs and travel risks. Families may request written reasons and use the authority's review and appeal process if dissatisfied.

When might the local authority refuse free transport?

The local authority may consider whether a nearer suitable school is available and the circumstances in which the EHC plan names the placement. Families should seek written reasons for a refusal and use the authority's review process; school staff will not promise entitlement or make eligibility decisions.

What if my circumstances change during the school year?

Families should tell the local authority and school promptly about changes in address, school, needs or travel arrangements. The local authority may reassess eligibility under its published policy, including any applicable transitional protection. The school will help plan changes to minimise disruption.

What if I cannot get my child to school?

Families should contact the school immediately if transport fails or prevents attendance. The school will record the circumstances accurately, liaise with the authority and safeguarding team, and support a prompt resolution. Transport difficulties will be considered when reviewing absence rather than assuming parental fault.

3. Working together to support children and families – Roles & Responsibilities

All staff at Leicester Therapeutic School are passionate about providing parents and carers with support and guidance to ensure their child is given every opportunity to experience a positive transition to Leicester Therapeutic School.

Where families have made transport applications and are waiting on a decision or route plan and are unable to get their child into school, staff will:

- Agree welfare contact appropriate to the pupil's circumstances, normally daily during an unresolved transport-related absence.
- Explore learning opportunities for children
- Consider a risk-assessed home visit where appropriate to welfare and safeguarding needs.
- Communicate with Transport services to identify next steps
- Consider additional support and signposting where necessary
- Consider a time-limited, authorised interim travel arrangement where appropriate, with suitable safeguarding, licensing, insurance and funding arrangements. This is not a guarantee of school-funded transport.
- Hold regular review meetings to discuss next steps on the transition plan
- Maintain/build relationship with child, providing activities and social stories to promote their sense of belonging
- Promote positive parental engagement

4. Drop off and pick ups

We have a dedicated drop off and pick up plan that outlines the procedures in place to ensure the safe arrival and departure of pupils who must cross a car park to access the school. The aim is to minimise risk from moving vehicles while maintaining a calm, predictable routine for children, families and escorts (appendix 1)

5. Safeguarding

The safeguarding team will provide drivers and passenger assistants with reporting information and the school's arrival and departure arrangements. For commissioned transport, the school will liaise with the commissioner about recruitment checks, training, identity and any concerns; a school information pack does not replace those checks.

The transport safeguarding pack will contain:

- Welcome front sheet, introducing Leicester Therapeutic School Safeguarding Team
- A copy of Leicester Therapeutic Schools Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Several Leicester Therapeutic School 'Report a concern' forms
- Envelopes, marked for the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Current school and emergency contact details, including how to report an urgent concern without waiting to complete a form.
- Drop off and pick up plan

Before a pupil starts travelling, and when arrangements change, we will liaise with families and the transport commissioner to confirm:

- The pupil's route, expected times, approved collection arrangements and an emergency contact.
- Expected vehicles and how substitutions will be verified.
- Driver identity and arrangements for notifying changes.
- Whether a passenger assistant is required by the individual transport assessment, and their identity.
- Operator contact details and agreed support for communication, behaviour, mobility, medical needs and emergency evacuation. Information will be shared securely on a need-to-know basis.

Staff will verify changes of driver or vehicle through the operator or local authority using known contact details. They will record handovers, report unexplained absence or late arrival promptly, and ensure the vehicle is checked so no pupil or essential equipment is left behind.

In the event that Leicester Therapeutic School have a safeguarding concern about the conduct of a driver or escort supporting a child, we will:

- Keep the pupil safely supervised while clarifying the concern with the DSL and transport commissioner; do not hand over to an unverified or unsafe adult.
- Contact Transport services immediately
- Inform parents unless doing so could increase risk or conflict with safeguarding advice.

Where the risk is deemed significant, LTS may:

- Call 999 where there is immediate danger or an urgent medical emergency.
- Delay handover while a safe, authorised alternative is arranged, escalating promptly through safeguarding procedures.
- Contact children's social care and, where an allegation concerns an adult working with children, seek local authority designated officer advice.
- Seek further advice and guidance

Record the concern, decisions, advice and handover arrangements. Follow the school's safeguarding procedures and share only necessary information.

Exceptional circumstances:

Exceptional staff transport requires Headteacher authorisation and a recorded risk assessment before travel. Staff cars must not substitute for an ambulance in a medical emergency. The assessment must address the pupil, route, vehicle, supervision, restraints, medication, communication and contingencies; parental consent must be recorded where practicable.

- Confirm the driver and accompanying staff are authorised, suitable and briefed on the pupil's needs and safeguarding arrangements.
- Record the journey purpose, route, departure and expected arrival, staff, passengers, contacts and agreed handover. Notify the school of arrival or significant delay.
- Ensure two members of staff are present, one driving and one supporting the pupil, as the school's normal requirement for exceptional staff journeys.
- Confirm an authorised adult will receive the pupil. Never leave a pupil unattended in a vehicle; if the receiving adult is absent, keep the pupil supervised and contact the school for a safe plan.
- Check that the driver has a valid licence permitting them to drive that vehicle in the UK and that the insurer explicitly covers the proposed work-related carriage of pupils. Confirm the vehicle is roadworthy, taxed and has a valid MOT where required. Record checks and require drivers to report changes affecting fitness or entitlement.
- Use correctly fitted, suitable child seats and seat belts. Children normally require a child seat until age 12 or 135 cm, whichever comes first. Specialist seating or wheelchair restraints require competent assessment and staff training. The driver must be fit to drive, avoid distraction and stop safely before dealing with distress or using a phone. If safe transport cannot be arranged, do not proceed.

6. Monitoring

The Headteacher will review this policy and its appendix by September 2027, and after a significant incident or change in transport arrangements. The proprietor body will approve material amendments.

Appendix 1

Drop off and Pick up Plan	
This plan outlines the procedures in place to ensure the safe arrival and departure of pupils who must cross a car park to access the school. The aim is to minimise risk from moving vehicles while maintaining a calm, predictable routine for children, families and escorts.	
General Principles: - Children's safety is the highest priority at all times. - Vehicle movement and pedestrian movement must be clearly separated where possible. - Children must always be supervised when crossing the car park. - All staff, parents, and visitors are expected to follow this plan.	
Arrival (Drop-Off) Procedures Vehicles will enter the drive way going in an anti clock-wise direction and pull up and stop between the gap in the brick wall at the back of the car park. Escorts/parents/carers to walk child through the walkway in the middle of the car park, up the ramp to the blue door where they will be greeted by a staff member.	1 Designated Drop-Off Point - Parents/carers/Taxis must use the clearly identified drop-off area. - Children must not exit vehicles outside of this designated zone. 2 Staff Supervision - A member of staff will be positioned at the car park entrance/exit during drop-off times. - A second staff member will be at the door greeting children. 3 Safe Walking Route - A clearly marked pedestrian walkway will be used. - Where possible, barriers, cones, or painted lines will separate pedestrians from vehicles. 4 Child Supervision - Children to hold hands with their parent/carer/escort if required. - Children must not run, or move away from the designated pathway. 5 Vehicle Rules 5MPH speed limit - Engines should be switched off while children exit vehicles. - No overtaking or reversing during peak times unless directed by staff.
Departure (Pick-Up) Procedures Escorts parents and carers will enter the drive way going in an anti clock-wise direction, drive to the drop off/pick up point and only get out of vehicles once they have reached the designated	1 Controlled Handover - Children will only be released to approved adults. - Staff will supervise children from the school exit until they meet their parent/carer/escort. - Parents/carers must meet children at the agreed collection point. 2 Staggered Pick-Up (If Required) - Pick-up times may be staggered to reduce congestion and risk.

drop off/pick up zone. They will then walk up to the ramp that leads to the blue door to collect their child. Staff will be on hand to support with a quick handover.	3 End-of-Day Vehicle Movement - Vehicles must remain stationary with engine off while children are entering. - Clear signals or verbal instructions from staff must be followed immediately.
Additional Safety Measures	Special Requirements
*High-visibility vests will be worn by staff supervising the car park. *Drivers please be reminded of: - Low speed limits - Pedestrian priority - No mobile phone use while driving *The plan will be shared with all parents/carers/taxis and visitors. *Any near misses or concerns will be logged and reviewed.	* Individual risk assessments will be in place where required. * Some children may require: - One-to-one staff support - Alternative arrival/departure times - A closer drop-off point where possible
<u>Review</u> This plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains effective, appropriate, and responsive to the needs of the children, families, and staff. Reviews will take place at least annually and more frequently if required.	
Thank you to all parents, carers, staff, and visitors for their cooperation and commitment to keeping our children safe. By working together and following these procedures consistently, we help ensure a calm, safe, and positive start and end to each school day for everyone.	
Completed by: Helen Dixon Date: September 2026 Review: September 2027	