

# Introduction to your role as a HTST Driver or VPA

“Happy, safe, and well supported on their journeys ...”



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

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## By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of home to school transport for children and young people with special needs, their parents, and the schools they attend.
- List the benefits you get in the role of driver or vehicle passenger assistant.
- Describe the Home-to-School Transport team and their relationship to transport providers and their values.
- Explain and understand how to react in an emergency.
- Explain and understand the procedure for reporting concerns.
- Recognize the importance of confidentiality and GDPR requirements.
- List Brighton and Hove training requirements for drivers or vehicle passenger assistants.
- Use the Learning Gateway.

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# “Not just another job ....”

- Home to School Transport (HTST) is not just another job.
- Our children and young people have significant and complex special educational needs and disabilities.
- The journey to school and back is a very important part of their lives but they may not find it easy to communicate their wishes and needs to you.
- This means you will need to use special skills of thoughtfulness, kindness, sensitivity and understanding to make sure that they are **happy, safe and well on their journeys.**



## “Not just another job ....”



- This training is very important as it will help you to develop these skills and understand the role more fully.
- Let’s hear now why the role is so important to children, young people and their families ....

# Why is the role of driver or VPA so important ... the parents view ....

My name is Jane and I live in Brighton and Hove. I have a son called Tom and he attends a special school in the City.



Tom has autism with global developmental delay.

- He is a happy, placid little boy and he loves going to school more than anything. He is non-verbal and relies on us for 24-hour care.
- He has no awareness of danger and very limited understanding of language.
- He runs off, so he needs a hand held at all times.

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Jane's "golden rules" to remember when transporting children like Tom are:

- It takes a huge amount of trust to let Tom or any child with special needs out into the world with strangers, especially if they are very young and can't yet communicate like my son.
- Please take time to get to know Tom or any child and their family and take seriously any concerns that they may have. Tom will run into traffic and I need to know that his taxi driver and VPA wouldn't let go of his hand **at any point**. Once I was sure of this this, I could relax.
- Your role is so important and makes a huge difference to a family who otherwise couldn't work or take their other children to school. It takes so much stress off families so always remember how important and appreciated turning up every day to do this job is!
- If you are kind, caring, patient, positive, and want to play a huge role in helping the most vulnerable children in the city to have the education they deserve (and help their families with work and respite in the process) then that's all you need!

## Jane and her son Tom

- Tom goes to school by taxi with a fantastic driver and VPA.
- They are so kind to Tom and to us and they are such an important part of his care.
- We trust them completely with Tom, and this is a huge help to us.



## The child's view ...

- What do you like about coming to school in the taxi?

I can talk to my friends. The same taxi picks me up from my mum and dad's house.

- What do you want your driver and escort to be like? How can they help you?

I would like them to be very kind and helpful. They can talk to me and help me out of the taxi.

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## The School View – Rachel, Executive Headteacher from Hill Park School ....

- We see HTST as an important part of the child's day and our day. You are part of our school community and part of the jigsaw of people that makes a wonderful day at school happen!
- Bringing our pupils to school is not just getting them from A to B. Having our pupils arriving at school calm, happy and safe makes a huge difference to their day (and ours). The children's ability to learn, manage their emotions and behaviour all starts with the journey to school.
- We care about you and want to support you to bring our pupils to school safely and enjoyably. We want to support you with advice and resources (like social stories or timetable boards) to help you support the pupils.
- We want you to enjoy the best relationships possible with our pupils, so we are really pleased you are engaging in training to support your role.
- Our pupils feel really safe when they have familiar drivers and VPAs who care for them.
- Parents tell us how excited their children are when they see the taxi or bus arrive. We see their faces light up at the end of the day when we open the school doors and you arrive!
- People are the most precious resource in any school. We want you to know how important and valued you are - as part of the team that supports our pupils.



## And the driver / VPA's view ...

- My name is Amira. I have been working as a VPA for three years. I help to take special needs children to and from school in the Brighton and Hove Area.
- I really enjoy this role because I like working with children and helping people. I started this job because my children are grown-up and I wanted to give something back to the community.
- Sometimes this job can be unpredictable, and this is what I particularly enjoy. No two days are the same, and I enjoy the experience of facing different challenges every day.
- Facing these challenges gives me immense satisfaction, as I am intrinsic to the well-being of these vulnerable children.
- I believe that providing high quality Home to School Transport is important because it gives all children equal opportunities to engage with education.
- Training helps me to do my job better. I have undertaken training in Disability Awareness, Epilepsy awareness, Safeguarding, and Emergency First Aid.



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# The HTST (Home to School Transport) Team

- You work for what we call a “Transport Provider” such as a taxi company.
- Your first point of contact will normally be with your employer, the “Transport Operator”.
- The Home to School Transport Team is part of the local council – they work with Children and Young People (CYP), their Parents and Carers, and schools to assess transport needs and establish contracts for taking CYP to and from home and school.
- If you have an urgent query, or one that your Transport Operator cannot answer – contact the HTST Team:

[hometoschooltransport@brighton-hove.sch.uk](mailto:hometoschooltransport@brighton-hove.sch.uk)

01273 293501 or 01273 295196

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## HTST and Transport Providers – Our Shared Values

The HTST Team and transport providers share the same values:

- We aim to treat each other, CYP, their parents and carers as well as school staff as **we would wish to be treated**
- We work and treat each other with **fairness** and **respect**.
- We recognise the need to maintain **appropriate boundaries** with CYP, their parents and carers as well as school staff
- We use **appropriate language** with each other and with CYP, their parents and carers as well as school staff
- We strive to provide **warmth** and **professionalism** at all times

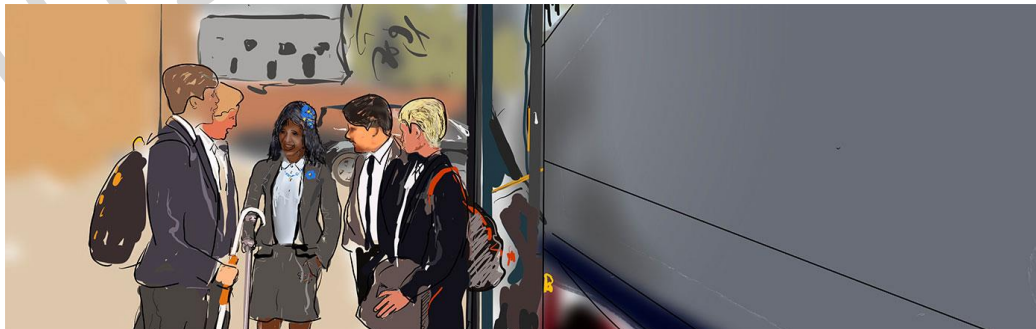


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# Medical Emergencies

We aim not to have medical emergencies on HTST journeys **BUT** ... if one happens .... this is what we expect you to do ...

- *If a child or young person you are transporting is known to have epilepsy you will have been provided with their Epilepsy Care Plan. This plan contains a section called “Transport statement for children with epilepsy”. If the child or young person has a seizure whilst you are travelling with them you should follow the instructions written in this section of the plan.*



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# Medical Emergencies

- *For all other medical emergencies, including a child or young person with no epilepsy care plan who appears to be having a seizure, the driver should stop the vehicle in a safe location, call an ambulance dialling 999 and await their arrival. This should be done without delay. It is very important that a note is made of the time the incident started. After calling the ambulance, the parents/carers, the HTST Team office and your “Transport Provider” office should be informed of the situation and kept updated. If the incident occurs on the route to school, they should also be notified.*
- *The only exceptions to this guidance will be where the vehicle is within two minutes clear driving of the child or young person’s home address, two minutes clear driving of arrival at their school, or two minutes driving of a hospital with an Accident and Emergency Department.*



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## Medical Emergencies

- It is important to note that drivers/VPAs (you) are not medically trained and therefore will not administer any medication to the child or young person.*



This information is given to parents when home to school transport is arranged and available to schools so they will always expect you to carry out these instructions if there is a medical emergency.

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# Reporting an incident or a concern



- If you witness an incident or an event happens that concerns you then you should contact and report it to your Transport Operator and the HTST Team office as soon as is safe to do so.
- If you are concerned that a child or young person is in **immediate danger of harm or abuse** then contact the Police by phoning 999
- For all other **safeguarding** concerns contact the Council's **Front Door for Families** by ringing 01273 290400 or complete their online referral form.
- We will explain safeguarding more fully in a later learning module.
- The HTST Team office contact details are:

01273 293501 / 01273 295196

[hometoschooltransport@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:hometoschooltransport@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

# Compliments and Complaints

- With your help we aim to provide a high-quality home to school transport service.
- It is good to get compliments, please make sure that you tell your Transport Provider and ask them to pass them on to the HTST Team.
- If you are asked to pass on a complaint, please make a note of the details as soon as you can and tell your Transport Provider and ask them to pass the details to the HTST Team.
- The HTST Team has a procedure for managing complaints which they will follow.





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# Confidential Information

- As a driver or VPA you will have access to **confidential information** about children and young people, their parents and carers details, and which school they attend ...
- This information is for **your use only** and only while you are working as a driver or VPA ...
- When not being used on a home to school transport journey any information should be **stored away securely** ...
- Make sure any confidential information is **not stored** in your taxi or vehicle overnight when it is not in use ...
- It is fine to talk about your job to others, especially how rewarding it is, but **not about specific children or young people** or to mention their names or personal details ...
- Any **breaches of confidentiality** around written documentation or other storage method (e.g. mobile phones) will be taken **extremely seriously** and is likely to result in the suspension of the route.

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# Training Requirements – 1 - Core

- The Brighton and Hove HTST Team have currently identified five core training modules for drivers and VPAs to undertake:
  - Module 1 – Introduction to your role as a HTST Driver or VPA (this module)
  - Module 2 – Safeguarding on Home to School Transport
  - Module 3 – Equalities and the Equality Act
  - Module 4 – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
  - Module 5 - Exploitation

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## Training Requirements – 2 - Extended

- Children and young people who use our service will be risk assessed. Some will have additional needs identified. We will expect drivers and VPAs to undertake the following modules relevant to the children and young people that they transport:
  - Module 1 – Language and Communication
  - Module 2 – Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)
  - Module 3 – Supporting Behaviour
  - Module 4 – Epilepsy
- We think training is really important .... if you want to complete them all you can do and we are sure it will help you do your job better.

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## Training Requirements – 3 – Individual



- Some children or young peoples' needs are so specialised and individual that we will have to provide individual training to individual drivers and VPAs. If this is for a child or young person you transport, we will arrange this training for you.
- We also aim to arrange face-to-face training when the Coronavirus pandemic allows us to do so.

# Brighton and Hove Learning Gateway

- You will access the training modules on Brighton and Hove Council's Learning Gateway.
- You can complete the training modules on a computer, tablet or phone.
- You will get an electronic badge for each module completed.
- If you use a computer or tablet with access to a printer you can print a certificate on completion of each module.
- Your Transport Provider will give you details of how to access the Learning Gateway and links to the training modules.



