

**Surrey County Council**  
**Surrey School Travel & Assessment Team**  
**EQUIPMENT POLICY - 2025**

**Car Seats**

Every passenger travelling on a Surrey County Council (SCC) home to school transport contract should travel in the appropriate car seat for their age/weight/height. SCC will supply the appropriate car seat, see below for car seat specifications.

The seat remains the property of Surrey County Council but used car seats cannot then be recycled onto other routes. RoSPA strongly advises against buying or reusing second-hand child car seats due to safety concerns, as it's impossible to know if they've been involved in an accident that could compromise their safety, even if they appear undamaged.

Seats must be left with the parent/carer at the end of the contract, or at the end of the school year, for use when transport resumes. If it is not, then the transport operator will be expected to deliver the seat to the parents or the new operator.

Should a contract start before delivery of a required seat, a suitable seat should be obtained by a polite request to parent/carer to borrow one. This must be considered a short-term solution and replaced by a SSTAT supplied seat as soon as it is available.

The driver is responsible for ensuring ALL passengers are correctly seated into an appropriate car seat, and that this seat is correctly fitted into the vehicle. Where a passenger assistant (PA) is on board, they should be ensuring all seats are fitted correctly and all passengers secured correctly, but the overall responsibility for safety in the vehicle falls on the driver, who should confirm before starting the journey.

The driver and PA must always wear their seatbelts and set an appropriate example for passengers.

Drivers/PA's are NOT authorised to lift passengers in and out of car seats. If manual handling is required, and school/parents are not willing to undertake this, then SSTAT should be contacted to look at alternative equipment.

# Guide to fitting Car Seats

## Finding the isofix points

- Isofix cars have a slot hidden behind the car's rear seat in the joint between the back of the seat and the seat cushion
- To help locate the isofix points you can use a routing guide
- Some cars have them built in already



## Fitting a 5-Point Harness Seat

- Seatbelt routing should follow the **RED** guides
- Most seats can be fitted also with isofix
- Harness should be level with shoulder or no more than 2cm above
- Move to a bigger seat when the top of the child's head is above the top of the seat.



## Fitting a High-Backed Booster isofix car seat

- You can think of a High Backed Booster seat as a forward facing seat but WITHOUT a 5 point harness.
- The child is secured in the seat using the cars 3 point seat belt
- It can be secured using either isofix or 3 point seat belt
- Red guides show where the seat belt is routed



## Fitting a High-Backed Booster seat with seat belts

The child is secured in exactly the same way as the isofix High Backed Booster seat. The only difference is the 3 point seat belt secures both the seat and the child in the vehicle.



## Using a Booster Cushion

- Some booster seats have backs that can be removed as children grow bigger. Booster cushions that do not have a back are also available
- We strongly recommend that you do not remove the back of high-backed booster seats or use a backless booster cushion because the lack of a back and side protection.
- Difficult to position the diagonal strap of a three-point adult seat belt correctly across the shoulder.



## Avoiding those common mistakes?

### Buckle Crunch

The buckle must be level or lower than the child car seat



## Get the child secure in the seat

If the child is in the harness they must be securely fastened in the seat:

- There should only be space for 2 fingers between chest and the harness



## The seat is too loose

If using the seat belt to secure the seat get it really secure in the vehicle, push the seat into the back of the car seat and pull the belt tight, before locking it off.



A specialist SEN car seat may be appropriate for a passenger when all other avenues have been exhausted (such as a standard car seat plus a restraint or harness) and considered a last resort. The seat's compatibility with the vehicle would also need to be considered. If unsure contact: [ssat.enquiries@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:ssat.enquiries@surreycc.gov.uk)

| Car Seat                                                                                                         | Specification                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>5-point harness seat</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children under the age of 6</li> <li>• Maximum Age = 12</li> <li>• Maximum Height = 135cm</li> <li>• Maximum weight = 25kg</li> </ul> |
| <p>High-back booster seat</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum Age = 4</li> <li>• Maximum Age = 12</li> <li>• Maximum Height = 150cm</li> </ul>                                                  |
| <p>Standard booster seat</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum Height = 135cm</li> <li>• Maximum age = 12</li> <li>• Maximum Height = 150cm</li> </ul>                                           |

## Harnesses

Surrey County Council will supply a harness when required, either to help with the passenger's posture by keeping them in the correct position or to act as a restraint, to prevent the passenger from moving about in the vehicle.

If it is used as a restraint, consent from parents / carers should be sought and the harness should only be used as a last resort after other techniques have been trialled e.g. distraction techniques. It may delay the development of the child, and the reasons should be explained to the passenger, so they understand the dangers and refrain from trying to move about the vehicle. Please see below for which harnesses require parental consent.

The driver is responsible for ensuring ALL passengers are correctly fitted into any harness being used, and that this harness is correctly fitted into the vehicle. Where a passenger assistant is on board, they should be ensuring all harnesses are fitted correctly and all passengers secured correctly, but the overall responsibility for safety in the vehicle falls on the driver, who should confirm before starting the journey.

It is the driver/PA's responsibility to fit passengers into appropriate harnesses. If manual handling is required, and school/parents are not willing to undertake this, SSTAT should be contacted to look at alternative equipment.

All of the harnesses provided DO NOT act as a replacement for the seat belt, and the seat belt should be connected at all times when a harness is in use.

The harness remains the property of Surrey County Council, at the end of the contract, or at the end of the school year, the harness should be left with the child's parents / carers even if the child is continuing transport, so that it is in the right place should a different operator be contracted.

A Risk Assessment must be created when a harness is used on SSTAT contracts, and the Operator should keep a copy to be produced if requested. This must include confirmation of the parents' consent and that a Seat Belt Cutter and Signage have been installed on any vehicle that may operate that route.

**Harnesses we provide:**

|                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>28 SB</b><br>                       | <b>POSTURAL.</b> Front fastening, access required underneath and at back of seat. Works with high back booster car seat.<br><br>Model 28 instruction video:<br><br><a href="https://youtu.be/RYdFa-B35Vo?si=xF8wtcQtqrfZBYDC">https://youtu.be/RYdFa-B35Vo?si=xF8wtcQtqrfZBYDC</a>   |
| <b>Cummerbund (small / large)</b><br> | <b>POSTERAL.</b> Rear fastening, access required at back of seat. Can also be used in conjunction with other harnesses for challenging behaviour (ie to cover front fastening harnesses)                                                                                             |
| <b>13 J/H (Junior / Adult)</b><br>   | <b>CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR.</b> Parental consent required for use. Access required underneath, around sides and behind seat.<br><br>Model 13 instruction video:<br><br><a href="https://youtu.be/gFlkh83bPwE?si=xoNTc0nlgHXvRN1W">https://youtu.be/gFlkh83bPwE?si=xoNTc0nlgHXvRN1W</a> |
| <b>Magnetic jacket (XS-XL)</b><br>   | <b>CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR.</b> Parental consent required for use. Can be vertically or horizontally fitted, depending on vehicle layout.                                                                                                                                              |

These harnesses can be used on some wheelchairs but when used in vehicles will only fit single seats with easy access around the back rest of the seat & underneath the base of the seat cushion. i.e. people carriers, mini-buses or the front passenger seat.

## Other Equipment

**Seat Belt Cutters:** - It is recommended that all vehicles used on SSTAT routes have a Seat Belt Cutter and appropriate signage. But they **MUST** be present on routes that use harnesses.



**Chest straps:** - A Velcro chest strap fastens around each shoulder strap of a harness (or internal car seat straps) to help prevent the passenger from separating the shoulder straps in order to escape.



**Seat Belt Clips:-** These can be used under certain circumstances and only when a 'Risk Assessment' has been provided by the operator. Guidance and permission need to be sought from SSTAT before implementation on any SSTAT contract.



## Vehicle signage

Surrey County Council will provide signage for display in the vehicle when on school run routes to indicate that the vehicle is transporting Surrey school children. All signs will come complete with suckers to attach to inside of the vehicle window. These signs must be removed when a vehicle is not on a school run.

### **Signage provided:**

- 80 x 520mm taxi sign

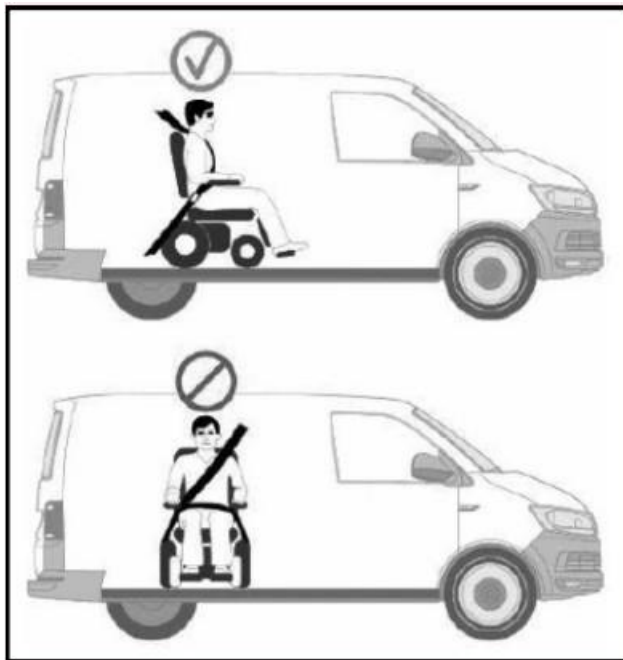


- 250 x 250mm minibus sign
- 400 x 400mm coach/bus sign



## Wheelchair Equipment

Surrey County Council has an obligation to provide transport for those passengers who need to be transported in their wheelchair. The council require the make and model of the wheelchair to confirm it has been crash tested in line with UK/EU standards (ISO 7176-19) and only once this has been confirmed will the passenger be allowed to be transported seated in their wheelchair.



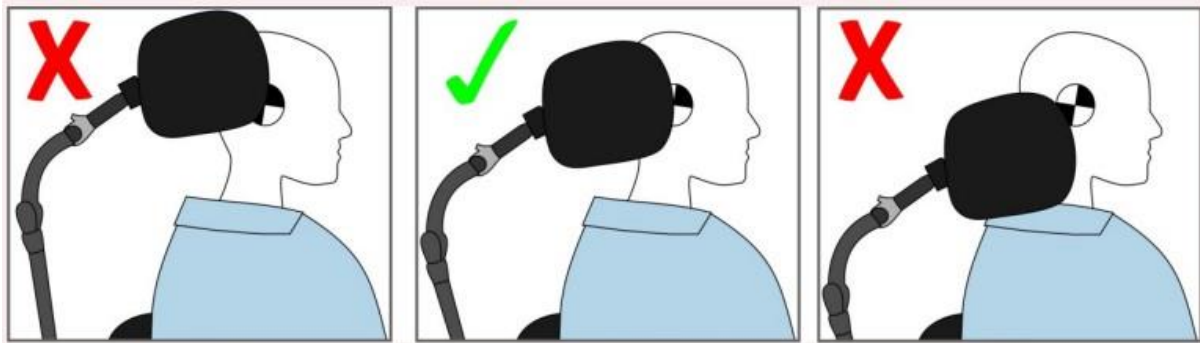
Wheelchairs must be transported forward facing ONLY and secured in a safe manner, using the appropriate front and rear tie downs and occupant restraints. In the event of any complications or uncertainty regarding wheelchair tie downs and occupant restraints, the supplier should contact SSTAT, who will advise. Restraint straps must have enough space, must be relatively straight to the line of the wheelchair, not be twisted or frayed and restrained to the appropriate point on the wheelchair.



Where a passenger assistant is on board, they should be ensuring all passengers are restrained correctly, although the ultimate responsibility for safety in the vehicle remains with the driver, who should confirm that all passengers and wheelchairs are safely secured before starting the journey.

Drivers/PA's are NOT permitted to engage in the manual handling of passengers into/out of wheelchairs and into/out of car seats. If a wheelchair does not conform to UK/EU standards (ISO 7176-19) and the passenger is unable to enter or alight the vehicle on their own, it is the responsibility of parent/school to place passenger into the correct position in the vehicle.

If a headrest is required for safe transportation of the passenger, advice can be obtained from Surrey Wheelchair Service at [rosscare.co.uk](http://rosscare.co.uk). Any additional equipment to be fixed to the wheelchair needs to meet ISO 7176-19 standards.



It is the responsibility of parent/school to fit, maintain and remove any additional equipment fitted to the wheelchair for transportation that is not required in the day-to-day use of the wheelchair. Drivers / PA's are NOT permitted to interfere with a wheelchair, outside of the normal process required to secure the wheelchair for safe transportation.

| Equipment                                                                                                   | Specification                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wheelchair tie downs<br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information can be provided on the correct front and rear tie downs for specific makes and models of wheelchair, and vehicle configuration.</li> </ul>        |
| Headrests<br>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information can be provided on wheelchair headrests for specific makes and models of wheelchair.</li> </ul>                                                   |
| Further information                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact <a href="http://rosscare.co.uk">rosscare.co.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:sstat.enquiries@surreycc.gov.uk">sstat.enquiries@surreycc.gov.uk</a></li> </ul> |

## Preparing to travel with a Wheelchair onboard

Remember that ideally, wheelchair users should transfer to vehicle seats whenever possible, and the wheelchair stowed as an item of luggage. If this is not possible and the person needs to stay seated in their wheelchair, carry out the following before setting off:

- Check that the wheelchair is suitable for use as a seat in a vehicle
- Check that the vehicle is suitable for transporting the person sitting in their wheelchair
- Use the appropriate equipment to secure both the wheelchair and the seated passenger in position.
- Check if the wheelchair needs more than the standard 4-point restraining tie-downs. The wheelchair manufacturer's instructions for use should tell you this
- Ensure that powered wheelchairs are turned off
- Do not leave powered wheelchairs in 'freewheel' mode
- Apply the brakes on the wheelchair and/or block the wheels in position
- Secure accessories and postural aids to stop them coming loose whilst the vehicle is moving or in case of an impact

## Important Steps to remember when using a Tail Lift

1. **Ensure a Flat Surface:** Make sure the vehicle is parked on a flat surface to avoid any tilting or instability
2. **Engage Parking Brake:** Put the vehicle in park and set the parking brake to prevent any movement
3. **Clear Obstacles:** Check the area around the tail lift for any obstacles that might interfere with its operation
4. **Activate Lift:** Turn on the lift power switch and use the control pendant to unfold the lift
5. **Secure Passenger:** Wheel the wheelchair onto the lift platform and secure the passenger with a seat belt if available. Ensure the wheelchair brakes are applied.
6. **Supporting the passenger:** Where possible (if space and the tail lift weight restrictions allow) the driver should stand on the tail lift behind the wheelchair whilst the lift is in operation. If this is not possible then the driver should remain on the ground, behind the tail lift and wheelchair to ensure there is no movement (backwards or sideways) whilst in operation.
7. **Lift Operation:** Use the control pendant to raise/lower the platform to the vehicle/floor level

8. **Safety Checks:** Ensure the wheelchair and the passenger is stable before releasing the break and moving them in to or out of the vehicle.
9. **Routine Maintenance:** Regularly inspect and maintain the lift to ensure it operates smoothly and safely. All tail lifts must fully comply with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998.