

23.06.2023

Changed service level for transportation of pupils of special- and reception classes

Dear parent,

We are writing to you because on June 12th the Political Committee for Daycare-, Schools and Family has approved a service level for transportation of special and reception classes. The service level describes how and to what extent we will assist your child in being transported to and from school.

As you have a child who is entitled to transportation to and from school, the service level may impact how your child will commute to school in the future.

Is your child affected by the level of service?

If your child receives transportation through a bus card or if you receive a transportation reimbursement for driving your child to school, you will most likely not experience any changes. However, if your child gets special transport (i.e., driven by minibus/taxi) to school, you will probably be affected inversely.

We understand that changes in your child's transportation to and from school can cause challenges for both your child and your family. Therefore, we will endeavour to assist you as much as we can so that your child's transportation supports his/her schooling as effectively as possible in the future.

What concrete changes does the new service level entail?

Overall, the service level brings about three major changes that particularly affect students receiving special transportation:

1) The student must always be granted the least intrusive and costly transportation.

This means, for example, that the School Department must always explore the possibility that the child can transport himself on his/her own or via bus before considering offering the parents a transport allowance to cover the transportation. Special Transportation can only be granted when these options have been ruled out.

2) The number of carpools in the afternoon with special services is limited to two

This can lead to waiting times at schools where there are currently more than two afternoon transportations. According to the legislation, one of these two transportations can take place from an after-school care facility (SFO) if it is not more expensive to establish, but as a general rule, all transport must be to and from educational activities. The school is

responsible for supervising the children while they wait to be picked up or arranging the child's school day so that the waiting time is replaced by extended education.

3) The framework for specially arranged transportation is being tightened.

For students who currently receive special transportation under extraordinary circumstances, such as a reduced number of other students on the bus or solo transportation, there will be a more frequent follow up on the transportation needs in the future compared to the current situation. Additionally, when transportation is granted, a plan should be devised on how the student will transition to a different form of transportation, such as carpooling or regular bus transportation.

Why a new service level?

There are two main reasons why politicians have adopted a new service level:

- Partially, it must help to align the service we offer your child as well as other people's children, so that you as parents know what you can expect from us. In terms of legislation, we as a municipality are obliged to provide for your child's transportation based on certain criteria regarding distance, dangerous road and your child's functional level. We do, however, have the opportunity to decide how we organise the transportation, and we would like to standardise that service. For example, today, the number of trips varies from school to school. We want to change that so that we provide the same support and help to everyone.
- In part, it must help to reduce the increasing costs of special transportation that we have experienced in recent years. In 2023 alone, an overspending of 8.1 million Danish kroner is expected for transporting children in special- and reception classes.

Focus on the pedagogical purpose of the transport:

A significant part of schooling is to be well prepared for youth life, where you as a person can become as independent and self-reliant as possible. Therefore, with the level of service, we also have a pedagogical aim to help the child or young person to be able to master their own transport - for example with a bus pass and public transport to the extent that it is pedagogically feasible.

So, what happens now?

If your child currently receives special transportation to school, you may already be affected by the upcoming changes starting from the beginning of the next school year. The number of afternoon trips will be reduced to two departures. If this is fewer than what your child's school previously provided, it will likely have an impact on your child's transportation. You will receive notification of the pickup times from home and school for the new school year towards the end of the summer vacation. Regarding whether your child will continue to receive special transportation, this decision will be made when following up your child's transportation needs again.

If your child takes the bus to school, you will not notice any changes in the level of service.

If you receive transportation reimbursement for driving your child to school, you probably won't notice any changes in the level of service either - or in any case not until your child's driving needs have to be followed up next time.

In the School Department, we have already started working to ensure that the new service level can become a reality from the new school year. We will do whatever we can to ensure that the challenges this entails for your child and you as a family are as limited as possible.

With best regards,

Thomas Born Smith
Head of school