

Learning to travel on your own

A guide for young people with SEND

Why learn to travel independently?

Being able to travel on your own can help you:

- Go to college or work
- See friends and go out
- Feel more confident and independent

Step-by-step: how to travel on your own

Step 1: Get ready

Learn:

- Your full name, address and phone number
- Road safety (Stop, Look, Listen, Think)
- How to ask for help

Step 2: Plan your journey

Learn to:

- Check bus or train times
- Know where to get on and off
- Use route planners or timetables

Step 3: Practise with support

- Travel with a parent, carer or teacher
- Practise the same journey
- Build confidence step by step

Step 4: Build your skills

Learn how to:

- Cross roads safely
- Use buses and trains
- Pay for your journey
- Solve problems if something goes wrong

Step 5: Travel on your own

- Start travelling alone for short journeys
- Build confidence over time
- Stay safe and aware

Staying safe

- Stay in **well-lit, busy places**
- Sit near the **driver or other people**
- Keep your **phone charged**
- Tell someone your plans
- Carry **money or a pass**

Helpful apps and tools (assistive technology)

These can make travelling easier and safer.

Journey planning apps

These help you plan where to go and when:

- [Google Maps](#)
 Shows routes, bus times, walking directions
- [Citymapper](#)
 Easy-to-follow routes with step-by-step instructions
- [Trainline app](#)
 Find train times and buy tickets
- Bus apps ([Stagecoach](#), [Arriva](#), [First Bus](#))
 Show live bus times and updates

 These apps help with:

- Knowing where to go
- Knowing when to leave
- Seeing delays or changes

Reminder and organisation apps

These help you stay on track:

- **Phone alarms or reminders**
 Remind you when to leave or get off
- **Calendar apps**
 Plan your journey times

SEND support apps

These give extra support for confidence and safety:

- [Brain in Hand](#)
 Helps with planning, anxiety, and getting support if something goes wrong
- **Autism-friendly travel apps. Check out these apps:**
 - [Aubin](#)
 - [Calm App](#)
 - [Passenger Assistance App](#)
- **Emergency contacts/ICE (In Case of Emergency)**
 Store important contacts on your phone

Key messages

- ✓ You can learn step by step
- ✓ You can use tools to help you
- ✓ You do not have to do it alone

 **The goal is to help you:**

- Feel safe
- Feel confident
- Travel independently

My travel checklist

Things to check before and during your journey.

Before I leave home

- ☐ I know **where I am going**
- ☐ I know **how to get there** (bus, train, walking)
- ☐ I have checked the **time of my bus/train**
- ☐ I know **what time I need to leave**

What I take with me

- ☐ My **phone (charged)**
- ☐ My **ticket, bus pass or rail card**
- ☐ Enough **money (in case I need it)**
- ☐ My **keys**
- ☐ My **ID card** (if I have one)

Getting ready

- ☐ I am wearing the **right clothes for the weather**
- ☐ I have a **coat/umbrella** if needed
- ☐ I have comfortable shoes

Safety check

- ☐ I have told someone:
 - Where I am going
 - What time I will arrive

☐ I know who to call if I need help

During my journey



Walking

- ☐ I stay on the **pavement**
- ☐ I use safe crossings (Stop, Look, Listen, Think)
- ☐ I watch out for traffic



On the bus or train

- ☐ I check it is the **right bus or train**
- ☐ I wait in a **safe place**
- ☐ I get on safely
- ☐ I find a good **seat (near others or the driver)**



Getting off

- ☐ I know where I need to get off
- ☐ I press the button or get ready in time
- ☐ I get off safely



Staying safe

- ☐ I stay in **well-lit, busy places**
- ☐ I keep my phone and money **safe**
- ☐ I stay aware of what is around me
- ☐ If I feel worried, I will:
 - Go somewhere safe
 - Ask for help

- Call someone I trust

? If something goes wrong

☐

I know what to do if:

- I miss my stop
- I get on the wrong bus
- The bus is late

☐

I can:

- Ask the driver or staff
- Call someone for help
- Go to a safe place

✿ After my journey

☐

I let someone know I have **arrived safely**

☐

I think about what went well

☐

I practise again to build confidence

Remember

- ✓ It is okay to take your time
- ✓ You can practise with someone first
- ✓ You can use apps and tools to help you
- 👉 Every journey helps you feel **more confident and independent**.

What if something goes wrong?

Sometimes things don't go to plan.

This is okay — you can **stay safe and get help**.

If someone is unkind to you

If someone says something mean or makes you uncomfortable:

☒ What you can do

- ☐ Stay **calm** if you can
- ☐ **Do not argue or get into a fight**
- ☐ **Walk away** if possible

 Walking away helps keep you safe and stops the situation getting worse.

You can say (short and calm)

- “Stop.”
- “Leave me alone.”
- “I’m not talking.”

Keep it short and then move away

Move to a safer place

- Sit or stand near **other people**
- Sit near the **driver** (on a bus)
- Move to a **busier area or carriage**

 Being around other people can help you feel safer.

Get help

You can:

- Talk to a **bus driver or train staff**
- Ask a **safe adult**
- Call someone you trust

 Transport staff are trained to help if something is wrong.

Finding a “safe place”

A safe place is somewhere you can go if you feel worried.

Safe places include:

- A **bus or train with other passengers**
- Near the **driver or guard**
- A **station building**
- A **shop or café**
- Anywhere with **staff or lots of people**

 Staying near other people and staff helps reduce risk.

Simple rules

 Busy = safer

 Staff = safer

If you feel worried or scared

You may feel:

- Your heart beat faster
- Shaky

- Dizzy
- Panicky

This is normal. You can calm yourself.

Ways to stay calm

Try this breathing exercise

☐ Breathe in slowly (count to 4)

☐ Hold for 2

☐ Breathe out slowly (count to 4)

 Breathing helps reduce anxiety and stress.

Ground yourself

☐ Put your feet flat on the ground

☐ Look around and name 3 things you can see

 This helps your body feel safe again.

Positive thoughts

Say to yourself:

- “I am okay”
- “I can get help”
- “I know what to do”

If you get off at the wrong stop

This happens to lots of people — you are not the only one.

What to do

- Stay calm
- Go to a **safe place** (bus stop, shop, station)
- Check your phone or app
- Ask for help if needed

You can ask:

- A **bus driver**
- A **station worker**
- A **shop worker**

 It is okay to ask for help — people expect this.

You can also:

- Call a parent, carer or trusted adult
- Share your location
- Wait somewhere safe

Remember

- ✓ It is okay if things go wrong
- ✓ You can always get help
- ✓ You are not alone

What if it goes wrong? Real-life travel scenarios

What could happen and what to do.

Scenario 1: I got on the wrong bus

What happened:

You get on a bus. After a few minutes, you realise the stops look wrong.

What to do:

- Stay calm
- Press the button and get off at the next safe stop
- Go to a safe place (bus stop, shop or near other people)
- Check your phone or route
- Ask the driver or someone for help

Remember:

 Lots of people get on the wrong bus — you can fix it.

Scenario 2: I got off at the wrong stop

What happened:

You got off the bus too early or too late.

What to do:

- Stay where it is **safe and busy**
- Do not panic
- Check your journey app
- Call or message someone
- Ask for help if needed

 Tip:

 Use landmarks (shops, signs) to work out where you are.

Scenario 3: The bus is late or does not come

What happened:

You are waiting, but the bus is delayed or cancelled.

 What to do:

- Stay in a **safe, well-lit place**
- Check your app for updates
- Look for the **next bus**
- Tell someone you are delayed

 Remember:

 Buses can run late — you are still okay.

Scenario 4: Someone is unkind or annoying

What happened:

Someone is being rude, staring or making comments.

 What to do:

- Stay calm
- Don't argue
- Move away
- Sit near the driver or other people
- Say "Stop" or "Leave me alone" if needed

 Move to a busier area — being around others helps you stay safe.

Scenario 5: I feel unsafe

What happened:

You feel worried, scared, or uncomfortable.

What to do:

- Move to a **safe place** (near people or staff)
- Sit near the driver
- Ask for help
- Call someone you trust

 Transport staff are there to help you if something is wrong.

Scenario 6: My phone stops working

What happened:

Your phone battery dies or you lose signal.

What to do:

- Stay calm
- Ask staff or the driver for help
- Use signs and maps
- Go somewhere busy and safe

Tip:

 Carry emergency numbers written down.

Scenario 7: I feel overwhelmed or anxious

What happened:

You feel shaky, panicky, or upset.

☒ **What to do:**

- Stop and take slow breaths (in for 4, out for 4)
- Sit down if you can
- Focus on things around you
- Tell yourself: “I am okay”

 Breathing slowly helps your body to calm down.

Scenario 8: I don't know where to go at a station

What happened:

You get off the train and feel unsure what to do next.

☒ **What to do:**

- Look for signs
- Follow other passengers
- Find a member of staff
- Go to a help desk

Scenario 9: I need to ask for help

What happened:

You are unsure what to do next.

☒ **Who to ask:**

- Bus driver
- Train staff

- Shop worker
- Police officer

What to say:

- “Can you help me find ...?”
- “I think I got lost.”

Scenario 10: I am travelling in the dark

What happened:

You are travelling in the evening or at night.

What to do:

- Stay in **well-lit areas**
- Be near other people
- Sit near the driver if on the bus
- Ask someone to meet you

 Staying in busy, well-lit places helps keep you safe.

Key messages

- ✓ Things can go wrong — that’s normal
- ✓ You can always fix it
- ✓ Help is always available

 The most important things are:

- Stay calm
- Go somewhere safe
- Ask for help

**Shared Services (Adults' Health and Care and Children's Services)
Hampshire County Council**

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