



Skyguard Provides the First Service in the UK to help special needs pupils travel independently

Skyguard has been working with the City of Edinburgh Council to develop a pioneering new initiative which has led to a special needs pupil becoming the first in the UK to travel to school on his own, by using Skyguard's GEMshield personal safety alarm.

Craig Nibloe, from Pilrig Park School, spent five weeks using Skyguard's GPS device as he got the bus from his home to school.

He can now travel independently without the need for school transport, which allows him to have the opportunity to go to college to complete further education courses.

The City of Edinburgh Council has become the first local authority in the UK to train special needs pupils to use a personal safety service. Skyguard's service is more commonly used by Councils and businesses to protect lone workers and 'at-risk' individuals, as well as Police forces who issue the devices to the highly vulnerable such as domestic violence victims. The success of the initiative could lead to other special needs schools in the UK using the service in conjunction with their Local Authority. Traditionally, special needs pupils are taught self travel by teachers who have to accompany them over an average eight week period as they travel from their homes to school.

However, thanks to the Skyguard service, the need for staff to accompany them is eliminated and training is completed a lot quicker, with teachers able to train more pupils.

The pupil carries the pocket-sized device whilst the teacher is able to rely on Skyguard's online customer portal to pinpoint the pupil's location. The device can also be used as mobile phone allowing pupil and teacher to call each other, for example if the bus is running late. An SOS button provides vital backup in an emergency, allowing trained controllers at Skyguard's 24/7 Incident Management Centre to immediately locate the pupil, talk to him if it's safe to do so, and follow their personalised escalation procedures such as contacting their school, family members or the emergency services as appropriate. The pupil's relevant information such as medical history and emergency contacts can be updated in real-time, 24/7, using Skyguard's online customer portal.

(continued overleaf)

“ I always wanted to get the bus to school by myself but wasn't able to. I'm really pleased I can now do that on my own and go to college. ”

CRAIG NIBLOE (ABOVE) - STUDENT AND GEMSHIELD USER

“ Learning how to travel independently is so important for these pupils, yet can be challenging and frightening for them. This technology is giving youngsters and their families' confidence and security in getting around. ”

COUNCILLOR MARILYNE MACLAREN - EDUCATION LEADER FOR EDINBURGH

“ *The Council has really embraced this new technology, which is transforming people’s lives and making a real difference to them.* ”

COUNCILLOR PAUL EDIE - HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE LEADER, CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Craig said: “I always wanted to get the bus to school by myself but wasn’t able to. I’m really pleased I can now do that on my own and go to college.”

Pilrig Park School head teacher Ellen Muir was full of praise for the Skyguard solution. She said: “Self travel training is always time-consuming for our staff but this technology means we can concentrate on those pupils who need a higher level of support and train more children to gain more confidence and become independent.

“One of the biggest pluses is that students need to be able to self travel so they can attend college so now we should have more taking up further education with more career opportunities being opened up.”

Cllr Paul Edie, Health and Social Care and Housing Leader for Edinburgh, said: “This Council has really embraced this new technology, which is transforming people’s lives and making a real difference to them. There are hundreds of older people living safely and independently in their homes thanks to Telecare.”

“Using this technology to help pupils make their own way to and from school is a natural progression and the amazing progress Craig has made shows how beneficial the system is.”

Will Murray, Skyguard’s Marketing Director adds, “We are delighted our service is being used by Edinburgh Council in such an innovative way. Not only does this improve the lives of special needs pupils by giving them greater independence, but it also allows Councils to save valuable resources and use their budget more effectively in helping special needs children in the areas they need it most.”

“We have received a huge amount of interest in this initiative from other Councils and are already working with a number of them to deploy similar schemes across the UK.”

To view a video of Scottish TV’s news feature on this article, visit www.skyguardgroup.com/news.

“ *Self-travel training is always time-consuming for our staff but this technology means we can concentrate on those pupils who need a higher level of support and train more children to gain more confidence and become independent.* ”

ELLEN MUIR - HEAD TEACHER, PILRIG PARK SCHOOL



To find out more please call 0845 0360 999

Skyguard 457 Kingston Road Epsom Surrey KT19 0DB
sales@skyguardgroup.com www.skyguardgroup.com



CERTIFICATE NO. ARC/G/3321