

# **Home to school travel assistance policy for children and young people**

Academic year

2020-2021

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Principles .....	3
3. Types of travel assistance.....	4
4. Eligibility criteria .....	4
5. Exclusions.....	5
6. Discretionary assistance .....	6
7. Length of time of assistance .....	6
8. Reviews of assistance provided.....	6
9. Assistance in future years .....	6
10. How to apply for travel assistance .....	6
11. Appeals.....	7
12. Complaints.....	7
13. Appendix: Definitions .....	9
i. Travel training programme.....	9
ii. Reimbursement of fuel.....	10
iii. Designated meeting point .....	10
iv. Relevant medical supporting evidence .....	10
v. Distance.....	11
vi. Safety of route .....	11
vii. Nearest suitable qualifying school.....	12

## 1. Introduction

This policy outlines the support and assistance available for children and young people, including those with complex special educational needs and disabilities, travelling between home and school/college.

Most children and young people will access school and college without additional assistance from the local authority. Where assistance is given, it should be seen as part of a plan of support that encourages children and young people to become more independent and resilient in their future lives.

The Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to make such suitable and free travel arrangements for 'eligible children' as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school and this duty underpins the policy.

The policy has been written in conjunction with the:

- Education Act 1996
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 0-25 years Code of Practice 2014
- Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014
- Post 16 Transport to Education and Training 2019

In this policy, the term 'parent/guardian' should be taken to include all those with parental responsibilities.

## 2. Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following general principles:

- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly
- Students who are able to travel independently, use public transport or be transported to school by a parent/guardian or other appropriate person will be encouraged to do so
- The council will ensure that all travel options are explored for students and any assistance offered will look at what is efficient and effective, both in terms of sustainability and cost
- Students who have additional travel needs will be offered the most independent and personally enabling solution for their situation and be supported if required
- The travel needs of students will be reviewed regularly to ensure the arrangements are still appropriate for their assessed needs
- Where travel assistance is provided, the most cost-effective mode of transport that meets the individual's needs must always be used
- The use of existing provision such as free travel on public transport will be encouraged wherever possible

### 3. Types of travel assistance

As part of the Transport for London service, students can travel free and at a discounted fare on buses and trains, up until they finish education or at any age if they have a disability.

For support above and beyond what is available from Transport for London, there are different types of travel assistance that may firstly be offered to those who need support, depending on their needs, including:

- A space on the travel training programme to build confidence travelling and gain the skills required to do so independently, or with support (see appendix for details point 1.1)
- Reimbursement of fuel (£0.44 per mile) for an identified person to perform a maximum of four journeys per day (see appendix for details point 1.2)

In exceptional circumstances, students may be offered:

- A seat on a bus with pick up at a designated meeting point (see appendix for details point 1.3)
- A seat on a bus with pick up outside of the dwelling
- A taxi

There may be circumstances where a combination of the above support is offered.

### 4. Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria sets out who is defined as eligible for support from the local authority. The eligibility criteria should be read in conjunction with the council's principles for offering travel assistance.

This policy applies to:

- Children and young people in education aged 5-16
- Young people with special educational needs and disabilities in education aged 16-19

Students may be eligible for travel assistance due to the following reasons:

1. If the student has temporary medical or mobility needs which mean they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, and there is relevant supporting medical evidence (see appendix for details point 1.4)
2. If the student has long-term medical or mobility needs which mean they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, and there is relevant supporting medical evidence (see appendix for details point 1.4)
3. If the distance between the school and the home exceeds the statutory walking distance for a student that age and no suitable arrangement can be made for a school closer to home (see appendix for details point 1.5)

4. The impact of the student's special educational needs and disabilities on their ability to travel safely independently or with supervision
5. If the family is on low income and the distance between the school and the home exceeds the statutory walking distances (see appendix for details point 1.5)
6. The assessed safety and nature of the route between the school and the home and the alternative routes available (see appendix for details point 1.6)
7. Parent/guardian medical or mobility needs which mean they cannot reasonably be expected to transport the student to school, when the student cannot transport themselves, with relevant supporting medical evidence (see appendix for details point 1.4)

Applications for travel assistance will take into account the following before providing travel assistance:

1. The age of the student
2. The benefit of the student receiving travel training
3. The student's need for specialist transport
4. The student's need for supervision
5. The student's alternative travel options available
6. Whether the student can be accompanied on their travel to school and whether the parent/guardian can reasonably be expected to accompany the student
7. If parents/guardians are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit or if the student receives free school meals after year 2 if in a government funded school, and the distance between the school and the home
8. The most efficient use of the local authority's resources
9. Whether the student has a Freedom Pass on the grounds of their disability
10. Whether the student has a 16-19 years bursary fund on the grounds of transport
11. Whether the student has a free or discounted travel card provided by Transport for London
12. The possession of a blue badge for the student or parent/guardian
13. Whether the school placement was made on parental/guardian preference and there is another suitable qualifying school (see appendix for details point 1.7) located closer or via a safer route to the home address
14. If the student has an education, health and care plan, the view of the education, health and care plan panel will be taken into account on the student's need for travel assistance

## **5. Exclusions**

There are circumstances where the local authority will not provide travel assistance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- If a school needs to send a student home for any reason, parents/guardians are responsible for making their own arrangements for this
- If the school placement was made on parental/guardian preference and there is a nearer suitable qualifying school

- If the student has applied for and received another form of travel assistance, such as a travel card or Freedom Pass on the grounds of their age or disability, it is expected that this would also be used for travelling to and from school and exceptional circumstances would need to be demonstrated to justify any additional travel assistance

## **6. Discretionary assistance**

The Council has discretion to grant travel assistance even though it falls outside of the normal policy, and will do so in exceptional circumstances. The reasons for such decisions will be recorded and reviewed as required.

## **7. Length of time of assistance**

Where travel assistance is provided, this will be given for the length of time stated in the confirmation notice and will be given no longer than one academic year.

The Council has the right to withdraw assistance or change the type of assistance required during this period if needs and circumstances are found to have changed.

## **8. Reviews of assistance provided**

Where travel assistance is provided, the type of assistance given will be reviewed on a continuous basis.

For students with an education, health and care plan, a review of travel arrangements will be undertaken in line with the annual reviews of the plan.

Changes identified in a student's needs or circumstances may lead to changes in the type of assistance provided or the discontinuing of assistance.

## **9. Assistance in future years**

Travel assistance will be provided for the stated time and will be given no longer than one academic year. Travel assistance provided for one academic year will not be a guarantee of assistance being provided in future years, and applications will be reviewed on their own merits against the academic years' policy each year.

## **10. How to apply for travel assistance**

### **Free/discounted travel on public transport**

To apply for free or discounted travel, visit: [www.tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel)

### **Additional travel assistance**

To apply for additional travel assistance, visit: [www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance](http://www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance)

## 11. Appeals

### Stage 1: Request a review of the decision

If, after an application, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the application, you can request a review of the application to the local authority.

The request for a review must be made online at [www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance](http://www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance) within 20 working days of the original notification of a decision. The request must include the reasons for the review and any additional information that is felt not to have been considered when the decision was made.

The decision will then be reviewed by the local authority. The outcome of the review will be communicated within 20 working days from the date of receipt.

### Stage 2: Make an appeal

If, after the review of the decision has been completed, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, you can make an appeal against the decision to the local authority.

The appeal must be made online at [www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance](http://www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance) within 20 working days of the notification of the outcome of the review. The appeal must include the reasons the decision is being appealed and any additional information that is felt not to have been considered when the decision was made.

The appeal will be considered by a secondary panel within the local authority. The panel will consider the appeal in line with the policy within 40 days of receipt. The outcome of the appeal will be provided in writing within 5 working days of the decision being made.

## 12. Complaints

### Make a complaint to the local authority

The council's Transport Appeals Procedure will ensure that the merits of every transport application are fully considered and that it takes into account relevant circumstances.

However, if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome or believe the procedure has not been followed as expected, you can make a complaint to the local authority under the corporate complaints procedure.

The merits of the decision not to provide travel assistance will not be considered under this procedure, however, should the process followed be found to be flawed, the decision may be reconsidered.

Please provide as much detail as possible as this will help the investigation.

You can make a complaint to the local authority:

Online at: [www.havering.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.havering.gov.uk/complaints)

By email at: [complaints@havering.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@havering.gov.uk)

By post to: Customer Relations, Town Hall, Main Road, Romford, RM1 3BB

By phone to: 01708 431801

### **Make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman**

If you are not satisfied with how your complaint has been dealt with, you can request that the Local Government Ombudsman investigates the situation. The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent body which investigates complaints against local authorities.

You can request an investigation from the Local Government Ombudsman:

Online at: [www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-form](http://www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-form)

By phone: 0300 061 0614

By post: Please call the number above to enquire about complaining via post



## **13. Appendix: Definitions**

### **i. Travel training programme**

The Council's travel training programme helps young people with disabilities, special educational needs or additional needs of secondary school age to develop road and personal safety skills so they can make the journey to their place of education independently.

The travel training programme can support with any mode of transport; including bus, train, tube, walking or a combination of different types of transport.

The programme is designed to create long-term positive effects which can support young people through their transition into adulthood and in the future when travelling, which can include improved:

- social interaction skills
- life skills
- self-esteem
- management of fears and anxieties
- responsibility
- road safety awareness
- time management
- coping strategies
- communication skills

If a student is referred to the travel training programme by the Council, the service will meet with the student and their family to develop a personalised travel plan which takes the student's needs into account.

The student will then have their own Travel Trainer allocated to them who will accompany them on their journey and support them to develop the skills and coping strategies they need.

In order to identify those suitable for personalised travel training, the Council may arrange mobility assessments at the following stages:

- On receipt of any new applications for assistance in getting to school or college
- At the end of key stages 1 and 2 and at key stage 3 (approximately age 14), if already receiving Council assistance in getting to school
- Annually for those in further education establishments and already receiving Council assistance in getting to college

The Council's aim is to give increased freedom and quality of life to Havering's children and young people. It is also an enabling process for future employment and successful travel training has been demonstrated to increase self-confidence dramatically.

**ii. Reimbursement of fuel**

In the instance where fuel reimbursement is provided to a parent/guardian to transport a student, the following allowances will be provided:

<b>Journey</b>	<b>Amount per mile</b>
Journey to school from home	£0.44
Journey from school to home	£0.44

A maximum of 4 journeys per day can be applied for.

**iii. Designated meeting point**

Where travel assistance is given in the form of a seat on a bus with pick up from a designated meeting point, parents/guardians **must** make the following commitments to ensure the smooth-running of any arrangements:

- Provide up-to-date contact details to the Council so we can advise parents/guardians of any delays or problems
- Ensure that the student is ready to be picked up at the arranged time and place
- Ensure that the parent/guardian is waiting to collect the student at the arranged time and place at the end of the school day
- Ensure that the parent/guardian telephones PTS as soon as possible if the student is not attending school for any reason

**iv. Relevant medical supporting evidence**

The following relevant medical supporting evidence will be accepted for parents/guardians or for students:

- Copies of any medical letters or reports that you already have, dated within the last two years regarding the person's condition. Your documents must confirm that the person has a permanent or temporary substantial impairment which causes inability to walk or considerable difficulty walking. If you no longer have copies of medical letters or reports, the GP practice reception can provide a duplicate or a patient summary of the person in questions' medical conditions and medications.
- Copies of medical history documents no more than two years old
- Social services assessment/correspondence
- DWP entitlement letter (dated within the last 12 months) showing High Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance
- All pages of DWP entitlement letter (dated within last 12 months) showing you are in receipt of 8 points or more under the 'moving around' activity of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment
- War Pensions Mobility Supplement letter (dated within the last 12 months)
- Armed Forces Compensation letter 1-8 tariff (dated within the last 12 months)

- Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI or a BD8 form) where applicants are severely sight impaired

The following will **not** be accepted:

- Copy prescriptions
- Appointment cards/letters
- Copies of medical history documents more than two years old
- Personal statements
- X-ray copies

Please note, your GP should not be asked for specific information for your mobility and an appointment should not be made solely for the purpose of obtaining medical letters/reports for your application, but you should provide existing documentation in line with your routine medical appointments.

#### **v. Distance**

Travel assistance may be awarded on distance. This applies to children of compulsory school age if their nearest suitable qualifying school is:

- beyond 2 miles walking distance (if below the age of 8); or
- beyond 3 miles walking distance (if aged between 8 and 16)

If the parents/guardians are in receipt of Maximum Working Tax Credit or if the student receives free school meals after year 2 if in a government funded school, and if the distance between the school and the home is:

- The nearest suitable qualifying school is beyond 2 miles (if aged over 8 and under 11)
- The nearest suitable qualifying school is between 2 and 6 miles (if aged 11-16) and there are not three or more nearer suitable qualifying schools
- The school is between 2 and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (if aged 11-16)

The walking distance is measured from a student's home address to the school using the shortest available route along which a student, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school. Only when assessing the upper limits (up to 15 miles) for schools attended based on the grounds of religion or belief does the route only calculate roads.

Distances are calculated using an independent online route planner.

#### **vi. Safety of route**

If a student lives within the standard walking distance of the nearest suitable qualifying school, the Council may provide travel assistance where the nature of the route is such

that the student cannot reasonably be expected to walk (accompanied as necessary) safely.

In assessing whether or not a route is safe, the Council will take into account a range of factors including:

- the age of the student
- the width of any roads travelled along and the existence of pavements
- the volume and speed of traffic
- existence of street lighting
- different conditions at different times of year
- whether risks might be less if the student were accompanied by an adult and whether this would be practical

**vii. Nearest suitable qualifying school**

The educational setting attended by the student must be the nearest suitable qualifying school. This must be one of the following:

- A community, foundation or voluntary school
- A community or foundation special school
- A non-maintained special school
- A pupil referral unit
- A maintained nursery school
- City Technology Colleges, City Colleges for the Technology of the Arts, including free schools and University Technical Colleges
- The school named on the student's Education, Health and Care Plan