



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

SCHOOL AND POST-16 TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

All pupils up to the age of 16 (or 18 if they remain in full-time education) are currently entitled to free transport on buses within London. Havering Council considers this sufficient to meet the transport needs of the majority of children and young people under the age of 18.

The Education Act 1996 (as amended) requires Local Authorities to make such suitable and free travel arrangements for 'eligible children' as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school. This policy sets out the arrangements the Council will make in order to meet its statutory duty and, in addition, covers students from the ages of 16-25 with special educational needs who may also be entitled to assistance.

This policy has been approved by the Council's Elected Members and complies with the Education Act 1996 and its amendments in the Education and Inspections Act, 2006. It also follows the associated statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This policy is underpinned by the following general principles:

- It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly but the Council will provide assistance in getting to school for those eligible for help under this policy.
- Students who are able to travel independently or use public transport will always be encouraged to do so in the first instance, and supported to achieve this if necessary.
- Students who have specific travel needs will be offered the most independent and personally enabling solution for their situation.
- The Council will ensure that transport for eligible children is arranged when needed, after other potential options have been explored. Care will be taken to ensure that assistance is provided in the least restrictive way possible.
- The travel needs of individuals will be reviewed regularly and at least on a yearly basis to ensure that the arrangements are still appropriate for their assessed needs.
- Where additional transport is provided by the Council, 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 buses in London will be encouraged wherever possible.

3. TYPES OF TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

If assistance over and above free travel on public buses is required, the most appropriate type of travel assistance will be established by the Council following an assessment of the travel needs of the child. Family circumstances will be taken into account but requests from parents for a particular form of assistance will not unduly influence the final decision. The types of travel assistance which may be granted include:



- Provision of escorted walking route to school.
- Provision of a Welfare Escort or travel buddy to assist with travel.
- Provision of a seat on a vehicle which will transport the child or young person to their school or college from an agreed meeting point where this is reasonable.
- Provision of a seat on a vehicle which will transport extremely vulnerable pupils, particularly those with severe medical and/or mobility needs, from their home address to school or college.
- Provision of a pre-paid travel card for the child or young person to enable access to train or tube services.
- Provision of a pre-paid travel card for parents to enable them to accompany their child to and from school.
- Reimbursement of fares for travel to and from school arranged by parents up to the value of a travel card, and with the prior agreement of the Council.
- Reimbursement of fuel costs either by payment of mileage allowances or up to the value of a single travel card, based on mileage claims submitted by parents from an agreed Havering parental address to the child's school. Transport can only be provided to the child's home address.
- Combinations of the above arrangements.

4. ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 amended the Education Act 1996, setting out the definition of 'eligible children'. Those who qualify for free travel arrangements to and from school are defined as:

- (i) Children of compulsory school age (5-16) 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)
- (ii) Children living within the statutory walking distance but who are unable to walk to school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk.
- (iii) Children who are entitled to free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit if:
 - The nearest suitable qualifying school is beyond 2 miles (for children over the age of 8 and under 11);
 - The school is between 2 and 6 miles (if ages 11-16 and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools);
 - The school is between 2 and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).

- (iv) Children living within the statutory walking distance but who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school due to their special educational needs, disability or mobility problems, including temporary medical conditions.

The travel needs of the majority of children in Havering will be appropriately met by entitlement to free travel on London's buses, which is provided regardless of distance from school. However, a small number may qualify for alternative or additional help as set out in this policy, these decisions will be made by the Local Authority's Education, Health and Care (EHC) Panel. This is the Local Authority's multi-disciplinary decision making panel in respect of children and young people with special educational needs, working in partnership with Education, Health and Social Care.

5. SUITABLE QUALIFYING SCHOOL

A qualifying school in the context of this policy means:

- (a) a community, foundation or voluntary school;
- (b) a community or foundation special school;
- (c) a non-maintained special school;
- (d) a pupil referral unit;
- (e) a maintained nursery school;
- (f) city technology colleges (CTC), city colleges for the technology of the arts (CCTA) or academies, including free schools and University Technical Colleges (UTC)
- (g) For children with SEN, an independent school can also be a qualifying school where this is named on the child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) or statement, or it is the nearest of two or more schools named.

A suitable school is one that offers an efficient full-time education suitable to a pupil's age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs the child may have.

6. ELIGIBILITY: DISTANCE

6.1 Walking Distances

The Statutory walking distances are set out in section 4 (i) of this policy.

Children living outside the statutory walking distance to the nearest qualifying school, where no suitable arrangement can be made for a school closer to home, are eligible for assistance.

The walking distance is measured from a child's home address to the school using the shortest available route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school. The Council may take into account any circumstances which prevent the child from being accompanied by the parent. Distances are calculated using an independent on-line route planner.

Examples (Distance)

If an eligible child under 8 years of age attends the nearest school, which is 4 miles away, the child would be eligible for travel assistance.

If the eligible child lived 4 miles from the school but the parents chose to send the child to that school rather than to the nearest school 2 or less miles away, they would not be eligible for travel assistance.

If an eligible child aged 7 attended the nearest school which measured 2.5 miles away, he would be eligible for travel assistance. Next year however when the child turns 8 they would not be, as the walking distance for children aged 8 upwards is 3 miles.

6.2 Eligibility criteria

The vast majority of children eligible for travel assistance under this section would have their needs met by the provision of free travel on public buses in London. However, those who require additional or alternative assistance should apply using the Application for Travel Assistance form provided that:

- (a) the school is further than the standard walking distance from the child's home; and
- (b) the Council has been unable to allocate a place for the child at any suitable qualifying school within the standard walking distance.

6.3 Placements Based on Parental Preference

When a child is admitted to the parents' preferred school and there is another suitable qualifying school (please see section 5 of this policy) located closer to the home address, then the parents will be responsible for arranging and meeting the costs of their child's journey to and from school as the child will not be eligible for travel assistance. The distance between the home address and the preferred school is determined using address points and is measured in a straight line, not by the shortest walking or bus route, between the data points for the preferred school and the address of the child's normal place of residence. (Address points are points marked in the centre of the child's home address, or in the centre of a block of flats in which the child's home address is located and in the centre of the main building of the preferred school unless otherwise specified).

7. ELIGIBILITY: SAFETY

Where a child lives within the standard walking distance of the nearest qualifying school, the Council will provide travel assistance where the nature of the route is such that the child cannot reasonably be expected to walk (accompanied as necessary) in reasonable safety.

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

- the age of the child;

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

If a parent's disability prevents them from accompanying their child along a walking route that would otherwise be considered as safe without adult supervision the Council may consider a reasonable adjustment and may provide travel assistance. As per Schedule 35 of The Education Act 1996, disability is as defined in S.6 of Education Act 2010: a person has a disability if they have

- a) a physical or mental impairment, and
- b) that impairment has a substantial a long-term effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Therefore a chronic health condition may lead to eligibility under this definition.

Parents of children requiring travel assistance to school under this section should apply using the Application for Travel Assistance form.

8. ELIGIBILITY: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS and DISABILITIES ("SEND")

Generally, the Council expects the majority of children either to walk to school or travel independently on free public transport. However, the Council acknowledges that some children with Statements of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may require alternative or additional travel assistance.

Where transport needs are identified in a child's Statement of SEN or EHCP and travel assistance is given, this will be provided for the current academic year. The needs and circumstances of the child will be reviewed annually in the Annual Review of the Statement of SEN or EHCP and on receipt of application for travel assistance for the following academic year. Changes identified in a child's needs or circumstances may lead to changes to the type of assistance provided or discontinuing their assistance.

Each request for travel assistance will be considered on its own merits, and decisions in a small minority of cases may depart from the criteria if there are exceptional circumstances that apply. Reasons for decisions will be recorded and reviewed as appropriate by the EHC panel.

8.1 Children under 16 (or up to 19 with Statement of SEN or EHCP)

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly. The Council would not expect parents to unreasonably refuse to accompany their children if this is appropriate to

a child's needs. In some cases, it may be appropriate to enter an agreement to reimburse parents for travel costs.

If assessment shows that it would be inappropriate for a child to travel independently and the parents are unable to accompany their child, the Council may decide to arrange transport from a designated meeting point which, depending on the severity or complexity of the child's physical or learning needs, may include the child's home.

8.2 Types of School

Havering Special Schools and Specially Resourced Units, Pupil Referral Units and Mainstream Schools and Academies

Whether attending one of Havering's Special Schools, a mainstream school with a Specially Resourced Unit, a Pupil Referral Unit or mainstream schools or academies, children with Statements of Special Education Needs or EHCP may be entitled to travel assistance on the grounds of distance, vulnerability or physical disability.

If such reasons apply and parents are unable to take responsibility for the journey to and from school, they may apply for travel assistance. The Council will arrange for an assessment of the child's travel needs to be carried out to ensure that assistance of an appropriate nature is offered.

Residential Schools

Children placed in Residential Schools by the Council may be entitled to transport at the beginning and end of every school week or half term (depending on whether the child is at a weekly or termly boarding establishment), or to the reimbursement of their parents' travel costs in accordance with an agreement drawn up when the placement is made.

Out of Borough Schools

Where the Council has determined that an out of borough Special School placement is appropriate, parents will be offered the option of making their own arrangements if they prefer; if not, the Council will arrange transport if the eligibility criteria are met. They will be reimbursed either the additional cost of public transport or at a mileage rate agreed by the Council if using their own vehicles.

8.3 Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance and Freedom Pass

Parents receive the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance where they have been identified to have significant mobility needs. Where the Mobility Component is paid or a car is provided under the Motability Scheme, this may make it possible for the Council to explore with parents ways in which they could work together to find the most effective and mutually agreed travel solution. This could include, where appropriate, the allocation of a travel allowance and/or a personal budget, especially where this represents the most effective use of resources. Where a child has applied for and received a Freedom Pass on the grounds of their disability, it is expected that this would be also used for travelling to and from school.

Exceptional circumstances would need to be demonstrated to justify any additional assistance from the Council.

9. ELIGIBILITY: POST-16 STUDENTS

9.1 Free and Discounted Travel from Transport for London

Residents of London boroughs aged 16-18 and in full-time education or on a work-based learning scheme can apply for a 16+ Oyster photocard.

The card gives:

- Free travel on London buses and trams;
- Half adult-rate Oyster single fares on the tube, DLR and London Overground;
- Child rate travel card season tickets on the tube, DLR and London Overground;
- Half adult-rate Oyster single fares on some national rail services;
- Child rate travel card season tickets on national rail services.

Full-time education criteria:

- At least 12 hours of guided learning per week, between 09:00-17:00 Monday-Friday, for at least 10 weeks on further education courses at Level 3 or below in a sixth form college, academy, Further Education College or other training provider
- Examples of Level 3 courses include A-levels (AS/A2), vocational awards such as BTEC or City & Guilds qualifications at level 3 and the International Baccalaureate. It can also include apprenticeships and training courses funded by the Education Funding Agency provided the student is 18 or under on 31st August in the year during which the course is due to start. The school, college or training provider will be able to confirm if the course qualifies

Free travel is available until the end of the course or the academic year, whichever is earlier.

The 18+ Student Oyster photo card scheme:

18+ Student Oyster photo cards are available to students who are aged 18 and over, and are attending a full-time course (and in certain circumstances a part-time course) at universities, colleges and schools registered on the TfL.

The 18+ student card gives 30% discount on bus, tram, tube, DLR, London Overground and national rail travelcard season tickets.

Application forms are available from Post Office® branches throughout Greater London and areas that are served by the London bus, tube and Overground networks.

For further details visit www.tfl.gov.uk/zip

16 -19 Bursary Fund

For young people who need some financial support to help them stay in education and training after age 16 they can apply to their school, college or training provider for the new 16-19 Bursary fund.

The 16-19 bursary funds have two elements:

1. Guaranteed bursary: those most in need will be eligible for a bursary which is currently £1200 a year. To qualify students must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- In or recently left local authority care
- Eligible for Income Support or Universal Credit
- Disabled and get both Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

2. Discretionary bursary: Providers may use their discretion to distribute any remaining funds to young people in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of their students. Bursary funds should be targeted to young people facing financial barriers to participation, such as the costs of transport, books and equipment.

Providers have discretion to set policy, administer and allocate funds which best suit the needs of its learners. All organisations should have a 16-19 Bursary Fund policy which is available upon request. Applications should be made directly to the school, college or training provider.

If a learner feels aggrieved about how their request for a bursary has been handled, they should follow the school's/college's/provider's standard complaints procedure.

9.2 Students aged 16-19 with a Statement of SEN or EHCP attending School

These students may be eligible for travel assistance under the provision set out in section 8.1 of this policy.

9.3 Young Adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities ("LDD")

The Council has a duty to support participation in education and training for young adults aged 19-25 with learning difficulties and disabilities. This duty ceases at the end of the academic year in which a student turns 25 and applies to Havering residents only. The travel needs of those students aged 16-19 attending college or training whose statement of SEN will have lapsed but who have an s139a Moving on Plan or EHCP may also be supported by the Council, where necessary.

If assistance over and above free and discounted travel on public buses in London is required, application should be made using the Application for Travel Assistance form.

Additional travel assistance for these students may be provided in various forms. However, students with LDD should have access to independent travel training as part of their curriculum and participation in this will be expected, where appropriate.

10. ELIGIBILITY: MEDICAL OR MOBILITY NEEDS

10.1 Temporary Medical or Mobility

If a child who normally walks or uses free bus travel to get to school cannot for medical reasons do so for a period of time, alternative assistance will be provided where the Council is satisfied that the parents are unable to make arrangements for the pupil to be taken to school. Supporting medical evidence must be provided (see “How to Apply”). The provision of assistance under this section will be time-limited, based on the medical evidence concerning the nature and expected duration of the child’s medical condition.

10.2 Long Term Medical or Mobility

Where the EHC panel are in agreement that a child’s long term medical, mental/psychological or mobility condition prevents them from travelling safely with or without adult supervision to school / college, the Council may provide travel assistance. Supporting medical evidence must be provided (see “How to Apply”) and the provision of any assistance will be reviewed on a regular basis.

11. HOW TO APPLY

Free travel on public buses in London

Children aged 10 or under can travel free anywhere in London at any time on public buses without a ticket or Oyster photocard.

Children aged 11-15 can travel free anywhere in London at any time on public buses with a valid 11-15 Zip Oyster photocard.

Young people aged 16-19 in full-time education and living in a London Borough can travel free anywhere in London at any time on public buses with a valid 16+ Zip Oyster photocard.

Further concessions may also be available for travel on London’s Tube, DLR and Overground services. Visit Transport for London’s website for further details: www.tfl.gov.uk

Additional or alternative travel assistance

For parents of children or young people applying for additional or alternative travel assistance under sections 6 (Distance), 7 (Safety), 8 (SEND), and 9 (Post-16 SEND) of this policy, an Application for Travel Assistance form must be submitted in respect of each academic year for which the child requires assistance. Once travel assistance has been granted initially, forms for the following year will be sent by the Council to parents for the subsequent academic year. Failure to return applications by the deadline specified will result in an assumption that travel assistance is not required for that academic year and it will be withdrawn.

Applicants applying under section 10 (Medical or Mobility Needs), the Application for Travel Assistance form should also be used. Supporting medical evidence, usually from a General Practitioner (GP) or Consultant Physician, must be provided with the application. As

assistance may be time limited, further medical evidence may be required if travel assistance is to be extended beyond the period initially approved.

12. PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE

The Council will encourage and actively support children and young people in Havering who are capable of learning to travel independently. Travel training may be provided in the form of one-to-one training, covering all aspects ranging from road safety to journey planning, and would be tailored to each child or young person's circumstances. Schools and colleges are also encouraged to embark on their own travel training programmes.

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 requests for assistance in getting to school or college.
- At the end of each Key Stage 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, wherever possible, to give increased freedom and quality of life to Havering's children and young people. As well as being an enabling process for future employment, successful travel training has been demonstrated to increase self-confidence.

13. THE ROLE OF PARENTS

The Council is mindful of the difficulties faced by families of children with significant or complex needs which can impact on their ability to support their child on their journey to school. However, parents are expected not to unreasonably withhold their support in assisting their child. Where a child is identified as being suitable for and able to benefit from independent travel training by the Council, the Council expects parents to support the child in this.

Where travel assistance is given in the form of transport from a designated meeting point (which may include the child's home), parents **must** make the following commitments to ensure the smooth-running of any arrangements:

- To provide up to date contact details (in particular, telephone numbers) so that the Council's Passenger Transport Services ("PTS") can advise parents of any delays or problems.
- To ensure that the child is ready to be collected at the arranged time and place.
- To ensure that the parent (or other appropriate adult) is waiting to receive the child at the arranged time and place at the end of the school day.
- To telephone PTS as soon as possible if the child is not going to school for any reason.

Where a child will only be able to travel safely if a parent is present, the parent can be requested to act as escort for the child. This is not remunerated.

If a school needs to send a child home for any reason, parents **must** make their own arrangements for collecting their child. Travel assistance cannot be rearranged in these circumstances.

14. TRANSPORT OPERATION

14.1 Arrangements

Where travel assistance is provided in the form of a seat on a vehicle to transport the child to and from school or college, the operational arrangements are made by the Council's Passenger Transport Services. Pick up and drop-off times are arranged so that journey times are minimised and cannot be varied to suit the parent. Changes to arrangements will be made as and when deemed necessary by PTS for the efficient running of the service. PTS is unable to accommodate parental preference for a particular form of transport or contractor. Drivers and Welfare Escorts are not authorised to make any informal arrangements with parents with regards to routes, timings or collection/drop-off addresses.

14.2 Contact Details

The PTS can be contacted on either 01708 433188 or 01708 433843. For out-of-hours assistance, for example to notify the Council early in the morning that a child is not attending school that day and does not require transport, please call the Passenger Transport Service on 01708 433162, 01708 433184 or 01708 433185.

14.3 Home to School/College arrangements

In circumstances where a door-to-door service is given, the child will only be transported to and from the home address and the educational establishment. To avoid unduly complicated operational arrangements and to enable efficient route planning, requests to collect from or drop off at an address other than the child's home will not be accommodated.

If a school needs to send a child home for any reason, parents **must** make their own arrangements for collecting their child. Travel assistance cannot be rearranged in these circumstances.

14.4 Safety and Supervision

All vehicles and staff, including those provided by the Council's Passenger Transport Service as well as by private contractors, will be required to comply with industry and legislative standards. These include compliance with staff and vehicle checks.

Where a pupil's behaviour on provided transport poses a serious risk to the safety and well-being of themselves, other children or staff, and despite all reasonable steps to address the behaviour, the pupil continues to pose a safety risk, the Local Authority may consider withdrawing transport and will ask parents/carers to undertake the responsibility for providing/arranging transport until such time as it is deemed safe to transport the pupil.

Risk assessments of routes and safe meeting points will be undertaken as necessary according to the needs of the children using that route.

Welfare Escorts will be provided on vehicles transporting vulnerable children to ensure the safety and well-being of those passengers. All Welfare Escorts, whether employed by the Council or provided through an agency or private contractor or volunteers, are required to undergo screening by the Disclosure Baring Service (DBS) and will be subject to any changes in the legislation regarding safe recruitment. All are required to conform to the same health and safety and training requirements.

14.5 Guidance on Transporting Wheelchair Users

Parents are advised to provide full details of the wheelchair used, so that appropriate safety fixing clamps can be purchased. The Council's Passenger Transport Service will be pleased to arrange to examine the wheelchair to determine the best fixing method before the child's travel assistance begins.

15. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

For SEND or Post-16 meeting Eligibility Criteria:

Appeals against a decision to provide a certain type of assistance, or refusal of travel assistance must be lodged within 10 working days of formal notification of refusal and should be made in the first instance to the Commissioning, Procedure and Quality Assurance Manager, London Borough of Havering, Town Hall, Main Road, Romford RM1 3BD

For all other categories:

Appeals against a decision to provide a certain type of assistance, or refusal of travel assistance must be lodged within 28 days of notification of refusal and should be made in the first instance to the School Admissions Manager, London Borough of Havering, Town Hall, Main Road, Romford RM1 3BD.

In the event that the parent remains unhappy with the result of the appeal, they should write to the Head of Learning and Achievement.

Further complaints

Havering Corporate Complaints Procedure

The Council's Transport Appeals Procedure in respect of eligible Children and Young People will ensure that the merits of every transport application have been fully and properly considered, taking account of the relevant circumstances. However, if parents remain dissatisfied and believe that the procedure has not been followed properly, they may complain under the Corporate Complaints Procedure. The merits of the decision not to provide help with transport costs will not be considered under this procedure as that decision has already been

subject to an appeal to the Director of the department. However, should the process followed be found to be flawed, the decision may be reconsidered.

Complaints under the Corporate Complaints Procedure can be made in a number of ways:

- Online at www.havering.gov.uk/complaints
- By email complaints@havering.gov.uk
- By letter to **Customer Relations, Town Hall, Main Road, Romford, RM1 3BB**
- By phone **01708 431801**

However parents choose to tell the complaints team about their complaint, they should give as much information as possible as it will help the team investigate the matter fully.

Local Government Ombudsman

If parents are still not satisfied with the way their complaint has been dealt with they can ask the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate. This is an independent body which investigates complaints against local authorities.

To contact the Local Government Ombudsman, parents can contact them in two ways:

- By phone: Advice Team - 0300 061 0614. They will take all the details by phone so there is no need to complain in writing if parents don't wish to.
- Write to the Local Government Ombudsman: PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH. Parents should include a daytime telephone number so they can contact them to discuss the complaint.

Complaints regarding the day to day running of the transport service:

Complaints relating to the day-to-day operation of transport or the transport service received should be directed to The Passenger Travel Service Manager, Central Depot, 423 Rainham Road, Hornchurch, RM12 5BF