



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
**KINGSTON**  
UPON THAMES

# **Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Home to School Transport Policy**

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## Introduction

Home to school transport in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (the council) is delivered by Achieving for Children (AfC). Achieving for Children is a community interest company created by Kingston and Richmond Councils to provide their children's services.

The council and AfC are committed to meeting the educational needs of as many children and young people as possible within local schools. In most cases, this will mean that children and young people can walk or cycle to school with their parents or carers. This policy sets out how we will help the small number of children and young people who find it difficult to travel to school without some assistance.

## Policy statement

The council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people lead safe and healthy lives and have access to high quality education so that they are able to achieve their full potential. The children and young people's plans commit partners to work together to develop services that strengthen the abilities and resilience of children and their families to be independent. This includes encouraging partners to work together to increase the independence of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

This policy sets out the criteria for eligibility for travel assistance, how parents and carers should apply for travel assistance, how decisions are made and how parents and carers may appeal against decisions that they believe do not comply with this policy. The intention of this policy is to ensure that children and young people with SEND are appropriately supported to access suitable education.

The policy has been developed in consultation with parents and carers and is based on the statutory requirements placed on local authorities in 'Home to school travel and transport: statutory guidance for local authorities' (Department for Education, 2014), as well as the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children' (Department for Education, 2015) and the [Local Offer](#).

This policy applies only to children and young people with SEND. It requires that eligibility for such children should be assessed on an individual basis to identify the child's individual transport requirements. There is a separate home to school transport policy for all other pupils.

Local authorities' duties to provide SEND transport applies only to children and young people of statutory school age (ages 5 to 16). All other SEND transport provision set out in this policy is provided on a discretionary basis.

This policy applies to all children and young people who are resident in Kingston upon Thames (or who are children in the care of the council). The policy defines home to school transport as between a pupil's main home address and their school. A pupil's main home address is the place where they are habitually and normally resident.

This policy applies only to home to school travel arrangements. It does not, for example, relate to:

- transport to sports facilities
- work experience or work placements
- apprenticeships or traineeships
- medical appointments
- visits to other schools or locations (including school trips)
- collection from school due to illness
- parental attendance at meetings
- travel to or from extended hours school clubs
- exams

Where pupils have more than one address, home to school transport will be based on the residence where the pupil habitually lives.

If schools would like a pupil to attend a part-time timetable (either to transition on a shorter day basis to a new school placement, or where a child has been placed on a reduced timetable), the school must communicate with the SEND Transport Service and seek approval before putting this in place.

Transport assistance can only be provided on the basis of assessed need, rather than parental preference. All parents and carers requiring transport assistance for their child should submit an application for transport assistance. Only on receipt of an application will transport assistance be considered.

Only where a child or young person is assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria set out in this policy, will they be entitled to assistance with transport between home and school.

AfC will assess and consider home to school transport on the basis of the most efficient and cost-effective use of the council's resources.

## Eligibility

### All pupils

The legal responsibility for ensuring children and young people receive education rests with their parents or carers. Generally, parents and carers are expected to make their own arrangements for ensuring children and young people travel to and from school to guarantee that they attend school regularly.

Under-18s are eligible for free and/or discounted rates of travel within London. There are different schemes for different age ranges and you may need to apply for an Oyster photocard. For further information, please go to the Transport for London (TfL) [website](#). AfC expects pupils to make use of the free or discounted travel available and applications for this should be made directly to TfL.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide free transport to all pupils who meet the statutory walking distances eligibility criteria set out in the home to school travel and transport guidance:

- If a child is under 8 years of age and lives over two miles from school
- If a child is aged between 8 and 16 years and lives over three miles from school

In both cases, the pupil must be attending the nearest suitable school. This is defined as a school which has places available and that the local authority deems to provide education appropriate to the age, aptitude and ability of the pupil and any SEND they may have.

In addition, for pupils who are entitled to free school meals or their parents or carers are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit, free travel assistance will be provided, if:

- the nearest suitable school is beyond two miles (for children over the age of 8 and under 11)
- the school is between two and six miles (for children aged 11 for 16 where there are not three or more suitable nearer schools)
- the school is between two and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (for children aged 11 to 16)

Local authorities are also required to make transport arrangements for all pupils who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed inappropriate.

In the case of an eligible child, there is no duty to provide free school transport unless either:

- no arrangements relating to travel in either direction between the pupil's home and school are provided free of charge by any other person or organisation
- such travel arrangements are provided, but (even if taken together with any other such arrangements) they are not suitable for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at school

## School-age pupils with SEND

Local authorities must make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their SEND. Eligibility for such children should be assessed on an individual basis to identify the pupil's particular transport requirements. Usual transport requirements (for example, the statutory walking distances) will not be considered when assessing the transport needs of children and young people who are eligible due to their SEND.

## Pre-school children with SEND

Local authorities do not have a duty to provide or arrange free transport for children who have not yet reached statutory school age. However, transport assistance applications will be considered for children below statutory school age in some exceptional circumstances and it is expected that such children will already have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). In applying this exemption, AfC must be satisfied that without such assistance, the child would be prevented from attending an appropriate nursery or early years' education placement.

The general expectation is that a pre-school child will be accompanied on transport by a parent or carer, unless there is a good reason why it would not be reasonable to expect parents or carers to do so.

In assessing eligibility for pre-school children, particular attention will be paid to the following criteria:

- the age of the child
- the distance between home and nursery
- the SEND of the child
- The reasons for the pre-school education placement
- Whether the child has other siblings (of an age where it is not reasonable to expect them to travel alone) attending school(s) a significant distance away from the provision proposed for the child.

## Post-16 students with SEND

Where it is decided that a statutory school age pupil is eligible for transport, the entitlement to this provision may continue up to, and including, the academic year in which they turn 16 years old (although current eligibility is no indication of future eligibility).

Local authorities do not currently have a statutory duty to provide or arrange free transport to or from post-16 education placements (including sixth form provision or colleges) for students aged 16 years and over since these young people are above statutory school age.

Local authorities do have a duty to specify the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that it considers is necessary to facilitate the attendance of all young persons aged 16 and over receiving education or training. The duty applies in respect of arrangements for young people (over statutory school age) aged 16 to 18 and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday.

Where a pupil with SEND remains based at the school named in their EHCP (or statement of special educational need) or beyond their 16th birthday, AfC will ordinarily continue to arrange their transport until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 years of age. Where a young person's school or college changes post-16, their eligibility for travel assistance will be reassessed.

A student aged 16 to 19 studying at a school or college or on a training course (including an unpaid apprenticeship or traineeship) is entitled to apply for a bursary, which can be used for transport. The application is made directly to the education provider (for example, school or college). Information about applying for [a bursary](#) can be found on the website. Before requesting post-16 travel assistance, a student would be expected to have applied for a bursary and, if in receipt of one, to be spending at least one third of it on travel.

In assessing eligibility for students in post-16 education and training, particular attention will be paid to the following criteria.

- Whether this student is in current receipt of a bursary fund and to what value.
- The location of the sixth form unit or college the student would like to attend (if this is not local provision, the council and AfC would need to know that the course being taken is not available locally).
- Whether the sixth form unit is an extension to the school previously attended by the student and named in their EHCP.
- The SEND of the student.

Where it is agreed to provide travel assistance to young people post-16 education and training, the assistance will take one of three forms.

- Reimbursement of train or tube travel, where students have received independent travel training and are able to use public transport to make solo journeys (parents or carers would need to confirm that this person is able to travel independently).
- Mileage reimbursement, where students are not able to travel independently, but where parents or carers are able to provide transport.
- A standard travel allowance, equivalent in value to a mileage reimbursement, which can be put towards the cost of alternative transport (for example, a private taxi) where students are not able to travel independently and parents or carers are not able to provide transport.

Reimbursements and standard travel allowances are calculated in accordance with net household income. These figures are reviewed on a regular basis.

For the academic year 2021/22:

<b>If your net household income is:</b>	<b>Reimbursement percentage</b>
Up to £20,817 per year	100% of transport costs
£20,818 – £25,521 per year	65% of transport costs
£25,522 - £30,810 per year	35% of transport costs
£30,811 or more per year	Discretionary, dependent on total value of household income and total cost of transport

## Transition to adulthood

Transport may continue to be provided up to the end of the academic year in which a young person turns 19 years of age (for example, if their birthday is in December, they may continue to receive transport until July in the following year). Consideration of any future transport needs will form part of the young person's transition into adulthood plan. Adult Services within the local authority work closely with children's services and take a lead in this for adult services.

Information is available from:

### Kingston Adult Social Care

E: [adults@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:adults@kingston.gov.uk)

T: 020 8547 5005

## Short-term difficulties

**Pupils who do not receive transport assistance:** pupils who have short-term difficulties (for example, a short-term illness or health difficulty) may be eligible for transport assistance to and from school.

**Pupils receiving bus transport provision:** where a child receives home to school transport from a private bus company and cannot get to and from a collection point (for example, due to a broken leg or other short-term illness) temporary assistance may be offered as replacement for this service. Although the child's SEND has not changed, temporary physical or medical constraints make it difficult for the child to access the service.

**Pupils who have temporarily changed address:** transport assistance may not be provided where a child who usually receives assistance moves to a different address in the short-term if the changed address results in additional transport costs. The parent or carer will be expected to pay any additional costs associated with the short-term move, or make their own transport arrangements.

**Parents with a disability or illness:** where a parent with a disability or illness has difficulty in getting their child to and from school, additional support may be provided by adult social care services within the local authorities.

**Parents with authorised mileage allowances:** temporary assistance may be provided in those instances where parents or carers in receipt of authorised mileage allowances cannot transport their child to and from school due to a short-term illness.

**Parents who are unable to take their child to a collection point:** no temporary assistance will be provided in those circumstances where a parent or carer is unable to take their child to and from a collection point for onward transport to school by a private bus company. This is because the child's special educational need or disability has not changed and the transport service from the collection point is still available.

## Respite and foster care

While providing transport to and from respite and foster care is not a statutory duty, the council and AfC recognise that respite care provides valuable and necessary support to parents and carers. Applications for transport from a respite care placement to the pupil's school will therefore be considered.



It is the responsibility of the parents or carers to notify the SEN Transport Service of the dates of respite at least ten days in advance to allow sufficient time to plan the transport.

### **Re-housed children**

If a family has moved to an address within a different local authority area, the responsibility for the child's EHCP and their home to school transport transfers to the local authority area in which they are residing. This is because the family has become ordinarily resident in the new area. This is the case regardless of which local authority is paying the family's housing costs.

Ordinary residence is established if there is a regular habitual mode of life in a particular place 'for the time being', whether this is of short or long duration, the continuity of which has persisted apart from temporary or occasional absences.

### **Dual and link placements, inclusion and pupil referral units**

Dual placements are where a pupil attends more than one school, or where a school arranges a college link placement for a pupil. Dual placements may require additional transport assistance, such as transport at earlier or later times, or during the school day. Schools are responsible for arranging and paying for the cost of such transport. Where a pupil is on roll at one school but visits another school or college for inclusion or link purposes, the school where the pupil is usually based will be responsible for arranging and paying for transport. These arrangements also apply to pupil referral units.

AfC has the discretion to arrange transport for integration purposes.

The council and AfC expect all pupils attending pupil referral units to travel between home and the unit by bus if they have not made alternative arrangements. All bus transport for children aged 18 and under is provided by [Transport for London](#) free of charge with the use of the correct Oyster photo-card

### **Residential schools**

Pupils attending termly boarding school placements funded by the local authority for a standard 38 to 40 week academic year (and who are eligible for transport assistance) will be provided with transport assistance between home and school for the start and end of each term period (generally half-termly). This equates to 12 one way journeys (four journeys per term). Pupils attending weekly boarding school placements funded by the local authority will be provided with weekly transport. Transport for pupils in 52 week residential school placements funded by the local authority will be agreed on an individual basis.

Transport assistance for any pupils attending termly boarding school placements will not exceed the 12 one way journeys. If the school is closed on a weekly or fortnightly basis, this must be reflected in the fees being paid by the local authority for the school placement and, accordingly, transport will be provided to coincide with school closure.

Transport assistance will not be provided to parents, carers or family members who wish to visit residential schools for any reason. Any arrangements of this nature will need to be agreed directly with the school. In exceptional cases, parents or carers may be provided with transport assistance to school a maximum of once per year to attend their child's annual review.

Parents or carers who wish to accompany their child on the first day at school will be expected to make their own transport arrangements. Where a school stipulates that a parent or carer should attend on the first day, private transport must be arranged.

## Application process

### Assessing transport assistance entitlement for pupils with SEND

In order for a child to be assessed for transport assistance entitlement, parents or carers must complete an online application form accessed via the [Local Offer website](#) . All parents of children or young people who are awarded an EHCP will be advised about this process clearly within a letter from the SEND Service within AfC. The SEND transport assessment is also a standard section in the current EHCP documentation in Kingston. The SEND Service is required to provide a separate referral to the SEND Transport Service to confirm the basis of a child's school placement.

When assessing entitlement for transport assistance for pupils with SEND, the SEND Transport Service will consider the individual needs of each child. This may include taking professional advice from educational psychologists, medical officers and teachers and consulting with parents and carers before arriving at a final decision. Consideration will also be given to the pupil's physical and medical requirements including any disabilities they may have. Assessment may include face-to-face contact with the pupil. The findings and decision will be recorded on a transport assessment form.

In determining whether a pupil cannot reasonably be expected to walk between home and school, the service will consider whether the pupil could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and, if so, whether the pupil's parent or carer can reasonably be expected to accompany their child. The general expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a parent or carer, unless there is good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent to do so.

Consideration will be given to the following factors when assessing transport entitlement.

- The age of the pupil.
- The distance of the pupil from school to home.
- Whether the walking route is appropriate for the pupil.
- The SEND of the pupil.
- Whether the pupil has physical, medical or a social communication difficulty that would prevent them from using public transport.
- Whether suitable and accessible public transport is available.
- Whether the pupil may be vulnerable and at risk of danger if they use public or other transport.
- Whether the pupil would be a danger to drivers, other passengers and/or the vehicle if using public or other transport.
- The efficient use of resources.
- Any other individual circumstance.

This is not an exhaustive list. It is not presented in any particular order and is for guidance only.

Satisfaction of one or more of the criteria does not automatically entitle a pupil with SEND to transport assistance.

The fact that a pupil has an EHCP or attends a special school does not automatically entitle them to transport assistance.

Eligibility for transport assistance is related to the pupil's needs. Assessment may take into account the need for transport assistance due to some family circumstances. This will primarily be if a pupil has other siblings attending schools not local to the SEN provision offered to them, or is offered SEN provision at a school which is not their local provision. These factors will be considered when determining eligibility for home to school travel assistance and deciding on the type of transport to be provided. Other family circumstances, such as parents and carers attending work or looking after other children, cannot be considered when determining eligibility.

### **SEN education, health and care plans**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice states that transport should be recorded in an EHCP only in exceptional cases, where the child or young person has particular transport needs.

AfC's guidance to schools states that they should carefully review each pupil's individual transport needs at least once per year and advises that this could be completed as part of the annual review for pupils with EHCPs. This is of particular importance for pupils who are in Year 7 and above, who will be beginning their final phase of compulsory education and who may not receive any further transport assistance after they leave school to attend their choice of further education placement or employment.

Based on the outcome of reviews, AfC will make any changes necessary to transport arrangements which are the result of a pupil's changing needs. For example, a pupil may no longer require a passenger assistant or, by agreement, may be ready to start independent travel training. Any interim changes in circumstances may also result in a change in eligibility for transport assistance. For example, the family may have moved home to be closer to the school. Once a pupil is eligible for transport assistance, it does not guarantee they will continue to be eligible in the future.

The provision of transport assistance will also be reviewed to reflect any changes in government policy or legislation.

### **Nearest suitable school and parental preference**

The nearest suitable school is one that the local authority deems to be suitable for the age, ability, aptitude and specific needs of the pupil.

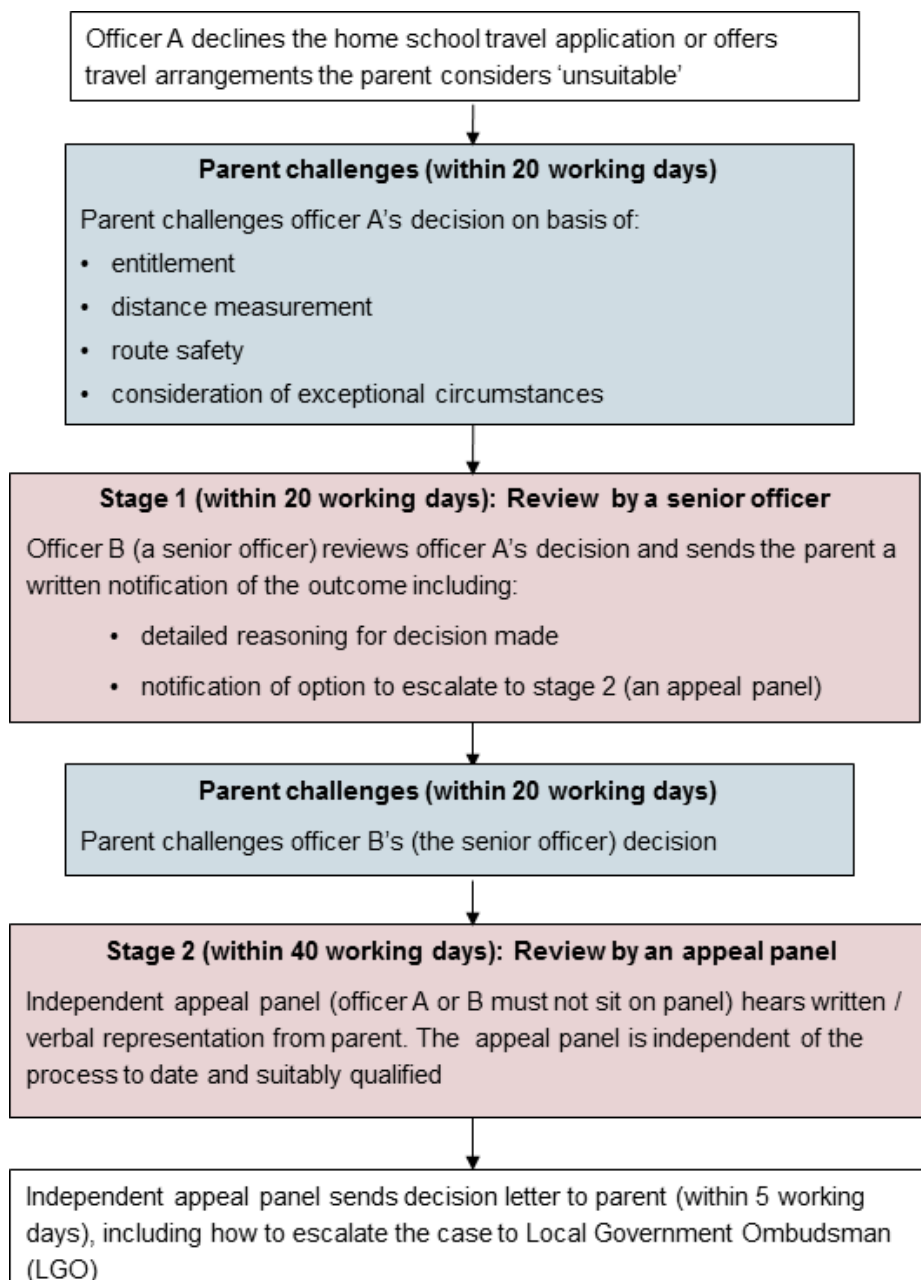
Parents and carers may express a preference for any maintained school or any form of academy or free school they wish their child to attend. If a parent or carer does express a preference for their child to attend a school further away than the nearest suitable school, then the local authorities and AfC reserve the right to refuse transport assistance to that school.

## Appeals

If AfC, on behalf of the council, declines a request for transport assistance, the pupil's parents or carers will be advised in writing of the decision and given details of how and when to appeal.

During an appeal about an initial application for travel assistance, transport will not be provided to the pupil. Where the appeal concerns a change to transport arrangements for a child who has previously been assessed as eligible, then the previously agreed transport arrangements will continue.

The appeal process is outlined below:



In line with the previous SEN Transport Policy (from 2007), the independent appeals panel referred to in the flowchart will, in Kingston, continue to be made up of council members (currently appointed each year by annual council to the home to school travel appeals panel).

## Transport assistance options

Transport assistance may take one of the following forms.

- Use of the free travel provided by TfL using an Oyster photo-card.
- Provision of a TfL travel-card.
- The allocation of a travel buddy.
- Training to travel independently (walking and using public transport).
- Training to cycle independently (reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment).
- The offer of funded driving lessons (where pupils are of the correct age, and this is the most cost-efficient option).
- Reimbursing mileage costs for parents or carers.
- Provision of a private bus service.
- Provision of individual taxis or licensed private car hire (in exceptional circumstances).

Parents and carers are required to complete an application for home to school transport assistance. Once eligibility has been assessed and agreed, transport will ordinarily take between six and 12 working days to arrange. In some cases, this may take longer, for example, where there is a need for a specialist vehicle. This time period allows the SEND Transport Service sufficient time to assess each child's needs, obtain quotes for the transport provider, and ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place.

Parents and carers will be informed of the transport arrangements in writing in advance of travel. They will be provided with a 'Getting to school' booklet which sets out the arrangements and duties of AfC and the transport provider, alongside the responsibilities of parents and carers. Parents and carers will be asked to confirm agreement to the arrangements by signing and returning a letter of agreement. Transport will not commence until the signed letter of agreement is received.

Availability of transport is not guaranteed. For example: a case may arise where a young person is non-ambulant, but has not been allocated a crash-tested buggy or wheelchair for use on transport. Transport crews are not permitted to lift pupils onto or off transport. Parents, carers and schools are also not permitted to lift pupils onto or off transport as a situation may arise (such as a mechanical fault to the vehicle) which may require the transport crews to lift the pupil during a journey. In these circumstances, parental mileage reimbursement may be given as an alternative.

Personalised transport will not be provided. Pupils must expect to travel to and from school with other pupils unless there are exceptional circumstances where it would not be reasonable to expect a pupil to do so.

Closed-circuit television (CCTV) with audio recording or global positioning systems (GPS) may be used on vehicles. The CCTV footage will not be shared or circulated with anyone outside the Council or AfC, but, along with GPS, can help to improve the speed and accuracy of incident resolution, and also supports transport crew training.

## Independent travel

Local authorities have a duty to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 25 in education and training. Independent travel training aims to achieve this. Schools are responsible for providing independent travel training to children and young people with SEND where this is appropriate.

Independent travel is a valuable life skill, an essential employability skill, and provides greater opportunities for young people, not least increasing confidence in their abilities and reducing their sense of reliance on family members.

The council and AfC will consider the following criteria when considering which pupils should be offered independent travel training opportunities.

- Existing level of independent travel skills.
- The age of pupil.
- The distance between home and school.
- The SEND of the pupil.
- The route which would need to be followed.
- Journey times using public transport.
- The frequency of the journeys required.

## Passenger assistants

Passenger assistants will be provided on some transport routes. The provision or non- provision of a passenger assistant on a route is based on several factors, including:

- the age of the pupil
- the distance between home and school
- information provided on the transport assessment form
- the SEND of the pupil
- The number of other pupils travelling on this route

There is no minimum or maximum age that determines whether a passenger assistant will be automatically provided and AfC will consider age in conjunction with all the factors listed above to make its decision.

Where a pupil travels on their own, the council and AfC encourage parents and carers (or a person known to the pupil and aged 18 or over) to act as their passenger assistant. Payment is not made in such cases. Provision of a passenger assistant at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement. The requirement will be re-assessed in the pupil's annual review, periodically during the year, and in the event of any change in circumstances.

## Implementing the policy

### Transport management

Transport is coordinated and managed by the SEND Transport Service in AfC on behalf of the local authorities. Each transport provider (whether taxi or private bus) will also have a nominated controller who is the first point of contact for schools, parents and carers, and who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service.

### Pick-up and drop-off arrangements

Transport providers are authorised to make pick-ups and drop-offs at authorised pick-up points only. The authorised points will usually be those specified on the EHCP (normally the home and school address), or, in the case of bus journeys, an allocated bus stop or collection point. Parents and carers should provide one alternative address, wherever possible, which must be within one mile of the usual home address, to be used in the event that the parent or carer is unable to meet the child. Any changes to these addresses, whether permanent or temporary, must be communicated in writing to the SEND Transport Service.

Until written confirmation is received, the only other authorised place for drop-off will be the nearest children and family services centre. The location of this centre will be communicated to parents and carers at the start of each transport arrangement. A change of address will be regarded as a change in circumstances, which may affect a pupil's eligibility for transport assistance.

Collection points may be introduced on some routes, where the pupils are ambulant, to improve the efficiency of the route and reduce journey times for pupils. Where the introduction of collection points is being considered, the council and AfC will consult with the parents and carers affected by this change in service.

Where a collection point is allocated, it is the parent's or carer's responsibility to make sure that their child travels to and from the collection point safely.

### Timing

The timings for pick-up and drop-off will be specified by the appropriate transport provider's controller and parents and carers must ensure they are aware of the correct times. Times may change if new pupils join a route, or if pupils leave a route.

Where pupils are picked up or dropped-off at home, the parent or carer is responsible for accompanying the pupil to and from their door to the vehicle. The parent or carer should keep a lookout for the vehicle's arrival since the vehicle will not sound its horn. It is against the law to sound a horn from a stationary vehicle. In exceptional circumstances (for example: where the child travels alone in a taxi with a passenger assistant) the driver or passenger assistant may call at the door or telephone ahead, although this is at the discretion of the transport crew.

Any variation to the usual procedure must be agreed with the controller. Parents and carers must ensure that there are no delays in making pupils available for the journey (or collecting them in the evenings) as this is one of the main factors affecting total journey times and can have a detrimental effect on how other passengers manage the remainder of their journey.

In order to minimise journey times for every pupil on the transport, pupils are required to be available within three minutes of the specified time of pick-up, and parents or carers are required to be available within three minutes of the specified time of drop-off. If the pupil, parent or carer is not available within that time, the transport provider's will attempt to make telephone contact with the parent or carer to find out if there is a particular difficulty on that morning.

If the controller is unable to make direct contact with the parent or carer, the driver is instructed to leave that pick-up or drop-off point and move onto the next point. Should the transport move on without the pupil, transport to school will then become the responsibility of the parent or carer for that individual journey. If the parent or carer is unavailable for pick-up on school-home journeys, the child will be transported to the nearest place of safety.

Transport assistance will be reviewed and may be removed if there are ongoing delays.

In some exceptional cases, to recognise the needs of an individual pupil, the three-minute waiting time may be adjusted and the transported provider informed.

In some cases, it may not be legal or safe for the transport to stop directly outside a pupil's home. In these cases, parents and carers are required to walk with their child to the safest nominated collection point, as specified by the transport provider.

## Absences

Where a pupil cannot attend school on any particular day (for example, due to illness), it is the parent's or carer's responsibility to contact the transport company immediately. For long-term absences, parents or carers should contact the SEND Transport Service.

Parents and carers should contact their respective transport company the night before travel if they know then that their child will be unwell on the following day. Alternatively, they should contact the transport provider as early as possible on the morning of travel if their child only shows signs of being unwell on the day they are due to travel.

All transport which is not cancelled in advance of the vehicle arriving at the home address must be paid for by the council whether or not the pupil boards the vehicle. Where parents or carers repeatedly fail to cancel transport provision for their child before it arrives at the home address, or where a pupil suddenly refuses to travel in transport which has arrived on any given day (without any prior notice having been given to the transport company), the pupil's transport provision will be reviewed.

Where it can be established that public funds are being used inappropriately, as a result of vehicles not being cancelled with sufficient prior warning, pupils may be excluded from transport for a period of time. Parents and carers will be responsible for transporting their own children during any period of exclusion from transport.

## Alternative arrangements

Transport providers are instructed to take children and young people to the nearest place of safety in the event that a parent or carer is unable to meet the pupil at the specified drop-off point at the specified time. Children's social care services may be notified and/or transport assistance withdrawn if this happens frequently. Parents, carers or schools should contact the controller or SEND Transport Service if there are any emergency changes.

The controller will have a duty to advise parents, carers and schools if there are going to be any foreseen delays to the delivery of the service.



## Parents with other commitments

It is not possible to take into account family circumstances when allocating pick-up and drop-off times for pupils. Timings will be based on the most efficient route available. The efficient planning of routes is a priority, especially as it is important to minimise the time that pupils need to spend on transport on every route. If AfC were to consider requests for pick-up times from parents or carers, then this could lead to inequality, since a vehicle cannot collect two children from different addresses at the same time. In addition, requests for pick-up times would also compromise route efficiencies – making them longer for all the other children and less economical.

Transport assistance is awarded to pupils with SEND because of their needs and should not be considered as an extension to childcare or a service which facilitates parents or carers working or looking after other children who are not yet of school age.

## Severe weather

In cases of severe weather, where parents and carers are advised that transport has been cancelled for their child's morning, they should assume that transport will also be cancelled for their child's afternoon journey, unless they are advised otherwise. If parents or carers decide to take their child to school despite the severe weather, they will also need to arrange to collect their child after school.

## Risk assessments

Where the council and AfC agree to provide either private bus transport or taxi transport for a pupil, it may be necessary to complete a risk assessment of their physical and medical needs. Until this risk assessment is completed, transport between home and school will be the responsibility of the parents or carers.

Some pupils with SEND have physical and medical conditions which deteriorate over time. If, at any point, it is felt by the SEND Transport Service that a further risk assessment may be necessary to ensure that a child's physical and medical needs are being met on board transport, this risk assessment will be planned and completed. Until the recommendations from this updated risk assessment are complete, it will be the responsibility of the parents and carers to transport their child between home and school.

## Medication

All members of transport staff have received accredited emergency first aid training.

Although there is no statutory duty for transport staff to administer medication, they are expected to ensure the health and safety of all pupils in their care. First aid training includes: managing the symptoms of shock, dealing with an unconscious casualty, cardiac arrest and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, choking, and seizures.

The emergency services can advise members of transport staff about the closest automated external defibrillator for use in treating a patient in cardiac arrest.

AfC will ensure that every driver and passenger assistant is able to respond to an emergency situation, however, they will not normally be expected to administer medical assistance. Every parent, as part of their application, is required to provide detailed information directly to the SEND Transport Service about their child's SEND and medical needs.

This information forms the basis of the pupil's transport plan. In some cases, where a child has very specific and complex needs, an additional care plan from medical professionals may be required.

Members of transport staff are not permitted to carry or administer medication or to replace medical accessories (for example, gastrostomy or tracheotomy tubes) on board a vehicle. The exception to this are pre-loaded EpiPens® or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices as these devices are loaded with the correct dosage of medication and do not require members of transport staff to accurately measure medication within a confined and possibly moving space.

In the event of an emergency on board a vehicle, the procedure is for the passenger assistant or driver to seek guidance from medical professionals by calling 999 and asking for a paramedic crew to attend the scene. It is for parents or carers to decide whether they wish for their child to travel on regular transport in these circumstances.

Where it is assessed to be unsafe for a pupil with complex or acute medical needs to travel with only a passenger assistant, AfC will seek to secure a medically-trained professional, such as a nurse, to accompany the pupil on the vehicle. A risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure the correct level of medical support can be arranged.

### **Journey times**

The nature of transport congestion in London means that travelling times can vary greatly. It is expected that children should arrive at school safely and fit to learn. Journey times should reflect this. The maximum journey time for a pupil travelling to a school in the borough in which they are resident is 75 minutes, however, this may be affected from time-to-time by traffic pressures, road works and other environmental and operational conditions. These journey times do not apply to pupils travelling to out-borough schools, where distances and the frequency of journeys will vary.

### **Behaviour standards**

Any pupil may experience behavioural difficulties. AfC will work with schools, parents, carers and transport providers to manage instances where a pupil exhibits extreme behaviour characteristics. Poor behaviour may affect the concentration of the driver, and the overall safety of the other pupils or passenger assistants, and in some cases alternative arrangements will need to be made.

In consultation with the pupil's school, it may be necessary to issue periods of fixed or permanent exclusion from transport. Parents and carers will be responsible for transporting their own children during any period of exclusion from transport. Non-provision of transport during these periods does not mean that the council is not fulfilling their statutory duties, merely that transport arrangements were made but, as a result of behavioural issues, had to be suspended or removed.

Where an allegation of unacceptable behaviour is received (either from a parent, carer, school or transport provider), the pupil against whom the allegation has been made may be temporarily excluded from transport services, whilst an investigation is completed. Written statements will be requested from the driver and any passenger assistant, the school, SEND panel and other parents or carers may also be consulted.

Depending on the SEND of the pupil, the circumstances of the behavioural problem and consultation with the school and other parties, the procedure will be:

Level	Incident	Outcome
1	First incident	First written warning
2	Second incident	Final written warning
3	Third incident	Permanent exclusion from transport services
*	Physical abuse (at any stage)	Instant exclusion from transport services pending investigation, including written statements

When using home to school transport, pupils must:

- remain in their seats at all times
- wear their seat belts at all times
- follow and abide by the passenger assistant's and/or driver's instructions

Pupils must not:

- Abscond from the vehicle
- Speak in an offensive or abusive manner to the crew, other passengers or any other member of the public whilst in or around the vehicle
- Behave in a way which may create a danger to themselves or other passengers, or in a way which could cause damage to (or shows disrespect to) the vehicle itself
- Exhibit behaviour of a sexual nature
- spit or fight

Additionally, no eating, drinking or smoking will be allowed on any vehicle at any time. This includes at times when pupils are not on the transport. In some circumstances, a pupil may be allowed water on board the vehicle.

## Providing a quality service

### Transport standards

Transport provision will be in accordance with contractual standards and legislation.

It is recognised that the quality of transportation to and from school can often affect the emotional welfare and behavioural pattern of a child. All drivers, passenger assistants and other crew members are expected to show understanding of, and empathy with, pupils, their parents, carers and school staff. They are expected to treat all children with respect and in a dignified manner appropriate to their age.

All drivers and passenger assistants will greet passengers, parents and carers politely and ensure that all passengers travel in comfort and safety.

All drivers and passenger assistants will have undergone a training programme and will be in receipt of an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, in line with the council's and AfC's commitment to safeguarding children and young people. Husband and wife (or civil partners) transport crew teams are permitted, however, families will be informed before the allocation of the route.

The competency of the driver and crew, the conduct of the vehicle during the journey and at the pick-up points will all be of a contractually prescribed standard.

The vehicles will be properly licensed and roadworthy.

- All vehicles with nine passenger seats or more will be inspected every six to 13 weeks. The frequency of inspection is set independently by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and is not set by the transport companies themselves
- All taxi vehicles with eight passenger seats or less are licensed by the Public Carriage Office (PCO) and are subject to two MOT inspections a year.

All vehicles will offer standards of comfort and safety as prescribed by relevant legislation. Regular audit checks will be carried out on all vehicles. Vehicles will have modifications to allow for wheelchair access where appropriate.

The vehicle must be at its prescribed point of pick-up within five minutes of its allotted time (although traffic conditions and delays at the pick-up points for other passengers may affect these timings). Any major delays will be communicated, either via the relevant controller or the SEND Transport Service, to the school, parents or carers.

## Continuity

Every effort will be made to ensure that the same passenger assistant and driver continue to transport a pupil, however this will not always be possible and changes may need to be made to ensure the most efficient use of available resources.

Parents, carers and schools will be informed by the transport company about any changes to the crew member(s) in advance. Parents and carers are advised to take the name of the new driver and/or passenger assistant, and ask to see their identification, or contact the transport provider to verify identity if they are in any doubt.

Local authorities have a duty to spend public funds in the most appropriate and cost-effective manner. Routes will be reviewed regularly. Separate routes, taking pupils to several different schools, may be brought together into a single route where this is appropriate. Longer routes will be reviewed periodically with the respective schools to ensure that concentration and attentiveness are not compromised by any change to pupils' journeys.

## Safeguarding

The council and AfC are committed to ensuring that children and young people on transport travel safely to school and arrive ready to learn. The following safeguarding systems are in place to protect children's safety and promote their wellbeing.

- There are fixed and pre-vetted crews on all routes.
- Crew members have valid DBS certificates and appropriate licences.
- Crew members have completed safeguarding training.
- Crew members are provided with certified first-aid training.
- Child-seating is provided for young people below 135 cm in height.
- Non-ambulant buggy or wheelchair users undergo a wheelchair risk assessment to verify that their buggy or wheelchair has been crash-tested for use on transport and to ensure that the correct safety equipment is used to secure the buggy or wheelchair in place.
- All confidential information is sent by secure email.
- All incidents on board transport are logged and investigated.
- Safeguarding concerns or allegations about a transport crew member are referred to the local authority designated officer (LADO) – see paragraph 117 for further information.
- Crew members are provided with a procedure in circumstances where parents or carers are not available at their home address at the end of the school day, or have requested an agreed alternative destination.
- Taxi routes are audited on a regular basis and checked for compliance against the service specification, including compliance with safeguarding procedures.
- Taxi providers are audited once per academic year and further strategic level checks are completed within these audits.

## Local authority designated officer (LADO)

Every local authority has a statutory responsibility to have a designated officer who is responsible for coordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused them harm. The role of the LADO is to manage and oversee any concerns or allegations about an individual who works with children and young people either in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Concerns should be referred to the LADO by contacting 020 8547 5008 or email:

[lado@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:lado@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

## Comments, compliments and complaints

The council and AfC are constantly looking at ways to improve the SEND Transport Service and welcomes comments from parents, carers, pupils and school staff on any issue relating to the service. Comments or concerns about operational issues should be addressed to the relevant bus or taxi provider in the first instance. In the event that the provider cannot resolve the concern, the issue should be escalated to the SEND Transport Service for resolution.

Formal complaints will be managed in line with the council's complaints procedures which is available [online](#) at.

## **Equalities statement**

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and Achieving for Children are committed to delivering a high-quality service to everyone regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation and economic status. We are committed to delivering a service that meets individuals' needs and choices in a sensitive, meaningful and practical way. Where necessary the service user's cultural, religious or any other specific needs that are brought to our attention will be considered and appropriate action undertaken in the delivery of the service. We are committed to ensuring that our services are delivered in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.

We will collect data from our service users and analyse these in order to identify any negative impact on specific groups or communities, including families entitled to the service due to their economic status. Nothing within this policy, or any omission from it, should be interpreted as relieving the local authorities or AfC from their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 or any other statutory requirements.