

Richmond upon Thames Council Post-16 Travel Assistance Policy Statement

Academic Year 2024-2025

Travel Assistance policy statement for young people aged 16 to 18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and those young people aged 19 to 24 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and disabilities

“Empowering children and young people
to live happy and fulfilling lives”

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Introduction

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support. They do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual travel assistance policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make it possible for everyone of sixth form age receiving education or training to attend school or college.

Most young people in Richmond upon Thames will be able to access their education without the support of the Council. It is expected that public transport and other travel options (including financial support) are explore in the first instance and used wherever possible.

All young people transitioning into post-16 education from year 11 must reapply for travel support, irrespective of whether they are currently receive assistance and are continuing at the same educational establishment.

‘Sixth form age’ refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age, but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (years 12, 13 or 14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties or disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

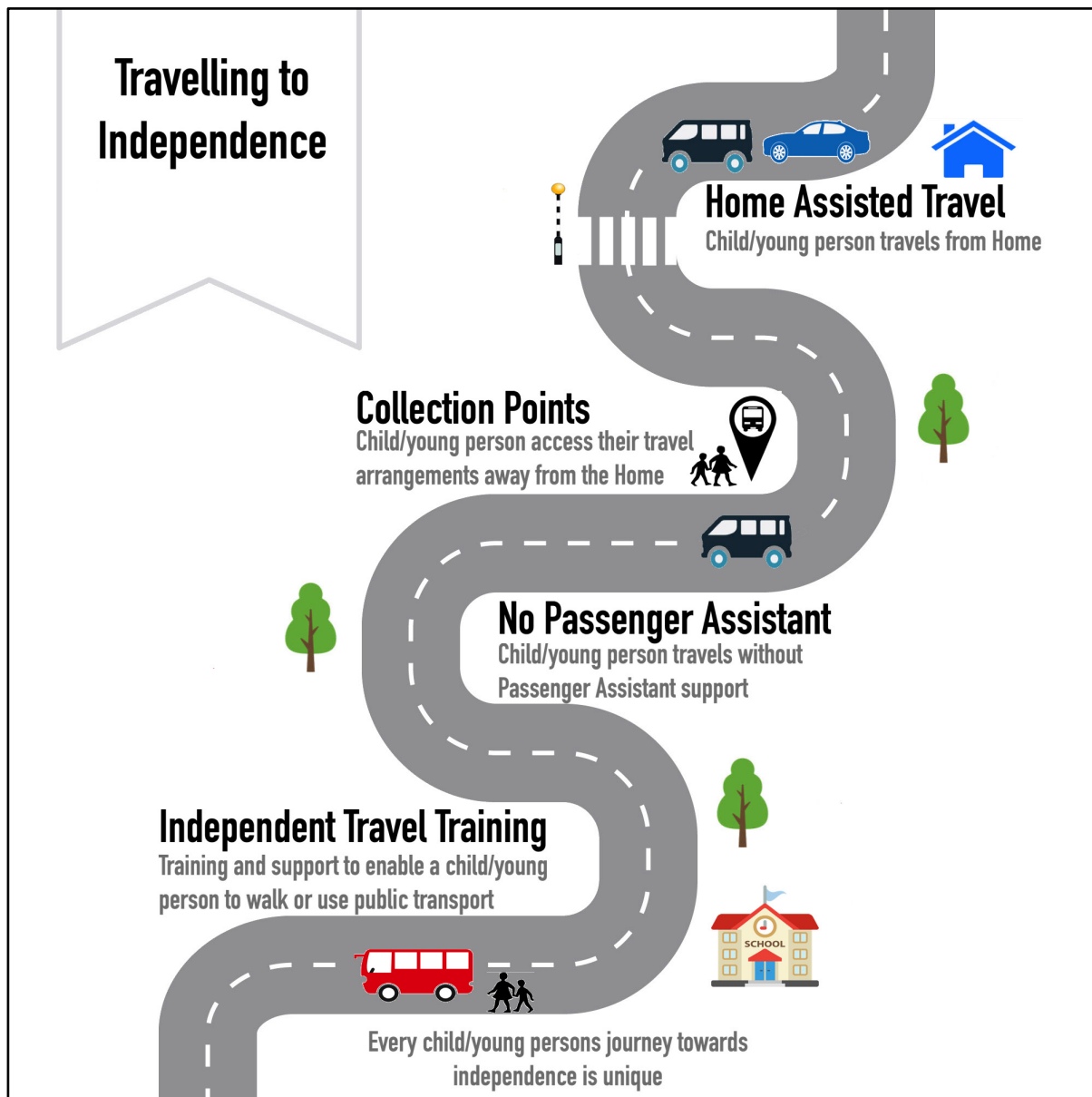
This policy uses the term ‘post 16’ which includes learners of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that Richmond upon Thames Council (the Council) considers necessary to make the attendance of post-16 learners receiving education or training easier.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, or learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the Council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

Aims and objectives

Where appropriate the policy will enable to service to promote the development of travel independence, supporting young people to develop and access travel arrangements where they are less dependent on others and increasing opportunities as they progress into adulthood.



This aligns with the SEND Futures Plan, which aims to ensure that:

“Every child and young person with SEND belongs to a local, inclusive community that provides the education, health and social care support they need to develop their talents and skills, and that empowers them to live a happy and fulfilling life.”

Through delivery, the service will contribute to the overarching vision for the children and young people of Richmond.

The vision underpins this policy in relation to the assessment of travel needs and necessary travel assistance provided.

- **Co-production:** Ensures children, young people and families are engaged about their support and what they want to achieve.
- **Personalisation:** Provides education, health and care provision locally through high quality services that are focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), promoting their independence and supporting them to live their lives with confidence and resilience.
- **Integration:** Makes sure the whole system, with education, health services and social care at the core, works together and with families to understand and respond to children and young people's needs in a coherent way, with each partner contributing to robust assessments, plans and funding arrangements, and monitoring the impact of their services and support.
- **Quality:** Ensures provision is high quality and delivered by well trained and supported professionals who work effectively together and use evidence to inform their work, promote resilience and achieve positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- **Inclusion:** Support the community to meet the needs of all children and young people by embracing diversity and inclusion, so that all children and young people with SEND have the same opportunity as their peers to play, learn and grow up all together.

The policy will also contribute towards the delivery of the Council's Climate Action Plan, aiming to make the Council's operations carbon neutral by 2030.

Transport and travel assistance

Concessionary tickets for young people 16 to 25 from public transport providers

Students aged 16 to 19 can access free travel on buses and trams under the TfL scheme.

16+ Oyster Photocard

Children aged 16 to 17 can get free and discounted travel on all TfL transport services with a Zip Oyster photocard. This includes the following:

- 50% off adult fares on bus, Tube, Docklands Light Railway, London Overground, TfL Rail and most national rail services
- if the student lives in London, they can get access buses and trams for free
- child rate seven day, monthly or longer period Travelcard, and bus and tram pass

For more information, please follow the link below

<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/16-plus-zip-oyster-photocard>

18+ Student Oyster Photocard

An 18+ Student Oyster Photocard entitles the holder to buy student-rate travel cards and bus passes:

- valid for seven days, one month or longer periods of up to one year
- at 30% less than adult-rate season tickets

Money can be added to an 18+ Student Oyster Photocard to pay adult-rate Oyster single fares. These are cheaper than paying cash. Oyster card discounts apply at all times of the day.

For more information, please follow the link:

<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/18-plus-student-oyster-photocard?intcmp=54727>

Apprentice Oyster Photocard

If you are 18 or over, live in a London borough and in your first year of an apprenticeship, you can get discounted travel with an Oyster Photocard. An Apprentice Oyster Photocard will enable 30% discount for adult-rate Travelcards and bus and tram pass season tickets.

For more information, please follow the link below

<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/apprentice-oyster-photocard?intcmp=54726>

National 16 to 17 saver (train)

In January 2019, the Department for Transport announced the launch of a new national Railcard scheme which benefits 16 to 17 year olds. This Railcard offers 16 to 17 year olds a 50% discount on rail travel, and is available from September 2019. More information is available on the Railcard website.

The saver offers 16 to 17 year olds:

- a 50% discount off standard anytime, standard off- peak, standard advance and season tickets for travel at any time of the day
- the card costs £30 and is valid for one year or until your 18th birthday
- a season ticket purchased before your 18th birthday can run up to four months after you turn 18. For example if you turn 18 in February 2020, you can purchase a season ticket which will still give you 50% discount for travel up until June 2020

It is not valid on:

- Oyster pay as you go daily price cap and pay as you go single fares
- London Day Travelcards and Travel Card Season ticketing within zones 1 to 9
- Tickets wholly for travel on London Underground and Docklands Light Railway

16 to 25 Railcard

The railcard costs £30 and enables a discount of a ⅓ of adult price fares. To be eligible you must be aged between 16 and 25 years of age.

For more information, please follow the link: www.16-25railcard.co.uk

Disabled Persons Railcard

The railcard is for disabled people, allowing them (and adult companion) discounted travel by train of a third.

If you are disabled or have a progressive medical condition, you are eligible for the Disabled Persons Railcard if you:

- receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Adult Disability Payment (ADP)
- receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Child Disability Payment (CDP) at:
 - the higher or lower rate for the mobility component
 - the higher or middle rate for the care component
- have a visual impairment
- have a hearing impairment
- have epilepsy
- receive Attendance Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance or Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP)

- receive War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement
- receive War or Service Disablement Pension for 80% or more disability
- buy or lease a vehicle through the Motability scheme

For more information, please follow the link: www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

Disabled Persons Freedom Pass

The travel pass is for disabled people, allowing them free travel across London and free bus journeys nationally.

To be eligible you must:

- live in London
- have any of the statutory disabilities listed in the Transport Act 2000

For more information, please follow the link:

www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/freedom-pass/disabled-persons-freedom-pass

Taxicard scheme

For disabled students unable to travel without assistance, they may be eligible for the Taxicard scheme, providing subsidised trips in licensed taxis and private hire vehicles for people with serious mobility problems.

For more information, please follow the link: www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/taxicard

Travel support from schools and colleges

Students may also purchase seats on vehicles run by individual schools, colleges or by third party commercial operators on the school's or college's behalf.

For further information on other available routes at other sites, please check individual school or college websites.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries.

- A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups:
 - in care
 - care leavers
 - in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
 - in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
- Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2024
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2024 and have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2024 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a government funding agency or the local authority

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk. Search for post-16 bursaries.

Young parents and 'Care to Learn'

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning. Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days)
- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to the childcare provider

Types of child care

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

- your childcare provider needs to confirm your child's attendance
- your school or college needs to confirm that you're attending your course

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Attendance

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding. This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at children's centres

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under-19 Bus Only ticket or for those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19 to 25 card.

For more information, please visit www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim

Further discretionary support for students aged 16 to 19 attending post-16 education

The Council will decide to provide travel assistance for students aged 16 to 19 (when continuing a course commenced before their 19th birthday) if it considers that travel assistance is necessary to help the young person to access their education or training provision.

Young people without special educational needs or disabilities (16 to 19)

Where a young person is unable to access their education due to issues with travel, assistance will be considered. To be considered for assistance, the young person must meet the following criteria.

- Be over 16 years of age and under 19 at the start of the academic year in which the course begins.
- Attend their post-16 education placement full-time, attending their nearest education provision, to their primary home address that offers their chosen course.
- If the post-16 placement is not accessible within a timetabled journey of less than one hour by buses.

If a young person is deemed unable to use the existing available travel options or access support to enable attendance, a travel grant may be offered. Support will be offered in the form of a grant which will be payable in three termly instalments to eligible students.

The value of the grant will reflect the number of Greater London travel zones of their journey, as follows.

- 1 zone of travel £200
- 2 zones of travel £250
- 3 zones of travel £350
- 4 zones of travel £470

Young people with special educational needs or disabilities (16 to 19)

During a young person's education between the ages of 5 to 16 it is expected, where appropriate, that support is provided to develop travel skills of individuals to enable independent travel and increase the number of travel options available to the young person.

When a young person is attending their education placement, it is expected, when it is appropriate, that they will make their own travel arrangements to enable attendance at their placement. The Council will only consider assistance when the young person is unable to do this due to their SEND or other circumstances.

Any assistance provided will be expected to support and develop independence as they grow and develop into adulthood.

In assessing eligibility for students entering post-16 education and training for travel assistance, particular attention will be paid to the following criteria:

- whether the student is currently in receipt (or has applied for) of any funding from the 16 to 19 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 a local provision, the local authority 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 distance from the student's home to their education or training establishment and the journey time
- whether the young person has SEND and mobility difficulties that would impede their access to their educational placement, independently or otherwise such as a wheelchair user
- whether the young person has SEND which would make it unsafe for them to travel independently
- whether the public transport journey to the nearest suitable placement is too complex for the young person to be expected to travel independently

Applicants must also evidence why it is necessary for the Council and not the student or family to make suitable travel arrangements. To assess this and understand the individual circumstances the Council will need to know:

- what other arrangements have been considered or tried and why they are not suitable
- if there is a family member or carer who is willing and able to transport the student
- whether the student is in receipt of higher rate mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance, the purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, with severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outside. We would normally expect this benefit to be fully used and if there are any factors limiting its use details should be provided
- whether there is a 'mobility' vehicle for which the student may or may not be the driver
- any other needs or circumstances that might need to be taken into account

Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis looking the individual needs, circumstances and merit of each case.

Contribution payment for students aged 16 to 19 attending post-16 education

If a young person meets the eligibility criteria for discretionary travel assistance from the Council, no contribution payments from the young person are necessary.

Support for students aged 19 to 25 attending post-16 education

The post-19 (19 to 25) travel assistance powers held by the Council apply to students with special educational needs and disabilities aged between 19 and 25 inclusive who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

The Council recognises that young people are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than pupils of statutory school age. As such, the policy for post-19 students is focused upon a needs-led approach in which the individual needs of each young adult are assessed to inform the appropriate form of travel assistance.

'Post-19' will include learners aged 19 to 25 (starting from the academic year after they turn 19).

The Council will consider whether assistance with travel is necessary to enable young adults with EHCPs to maintain attendance at their education placement. If it is identified that assistance is necessary, then there would be no charge or financial contribution expected from the young adult.

For post-19 students starting a new course, they must also evidence why it is necessary for the Council, and not the student, to make travel arrangements. The same assessment and considerations that were applied to students aged 16 to 19 will be applied to those 19 to 25, based on the evidence provided and, on a case-by-case basis, to determine if assistance from the Council with travel and access to their education placement is necessary.

Where it is identified that assistance with travel is necessary for a young person aged 19 to 25, no contribution charge will be required.

Apprenticeships

If an apprenticeship is named in a young person's EHCP, transport arrangements to support the young person to travel independently to their place of employment will be considered. These may include the costs of travelling to or from the place of work placement, based on an assessment of their access to other sources of support such as the Apprenticeship Travel card and 16 to 19 Bursary. Eligibility will be considered on the same basis as a student attending a school or college placement.

Those not in education, employment or training (NEET)

To support the provision of suitable education or training for young people who are 16 and 17 years old and not in education, employment or training (NEET), the Council may offer short term assistance to facilitate travel to interviews, work experience and other activities necessary to secure appropriate provision.

Each young person's circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Available support in other circumstances

Recognising that the Council's discretionary powers should not be restricted by its general policy, the Council will consider and may agree requests for post-16 travel assistance where there are extenuating circumstances that prevent a young person accessing their education placement unless travel support is put in place.

If the parent, carer or young person believes extenuating circumstances exist and support with travel is necessary, information and evidence must be provided when applying for support for this to be considered, or when appealing a transport decision.

The overriding expectation is that all available alternative travel options and support will have been exhausted before the Council will consider any further support. The Council will need to be satisfied that the parents or carers have demonstrated what travel options and support have been explored and why they are not available or suitable to enable access to the education placement for the young person.

A decision will be based on evidence supporting the case that travel support is necessary for the young person to access their education placement.

Where it is decided that a young person does not qualify for support with travel based on the presented needs or circumstances, it remains the parents', carers' or young person's responsibility to ensure attendance at their placement to continue their education.

In all cases the decision whether to exercise discretion will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Council provided travel assistance

Where a travel grant isn't awarded and where students are identified as only able to access their post-16 education with assistance from the Council after exhausting all other travel options, the Council may allocate a travel option from the categories below.

Subject to meeting eligibility criteria, the following support will be considered (in the following order):

- bus or train pass for the pupil (including parent or carer where necessary)
- independent travel training
- provision of a personal travel budget (PTB)
- payment of car mileage or travel reimbursement for the pupil's parent or carer
- provision of a cycling allowance
- provision of a suitable escort to enable a pupil to walk a short distance
- provision of shared transport (using collection point if appropriate)
- Individual transport

The provision of individual transport, such as a taxi, with or without escort, should be exceptional and only where it has been demonstrated that other modes of support are not suitable.

Other travel options may be offered where individual needs enable travel and the development of travel skills and independence.

All travel provision will be reviewed as part of the annual review of needs and if appropriate as part of an early review. Travel assistance provision may be withdrawn or amended if circumstances have changed or the SEND Transport Service considers the withdrawal appropriate as an encouragement to independence.

Provision of passenger assistants

A passenger assistant (PA) will only be provided following the outcome of an assessment of the young person's special educational or medical needs. This determination will be made by the SEND Transport Service taking into account whether:

- an individual young person's needs create a clear danger or health and safety risk to themselves and other passengers on the vehicle
- a group of young people travelling on a shared journey represent a clear danger or health and safety risk

The consideration for PAs will be made based on evidence received and will be reviewed regularly, where appropriate, and whenever a contract is re-tendered. Passenger assistants will not be allocated to a route based solely on a young person's age.

Where a young person travels on their own, the Council seeks to encourage parents and carers 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 and the requirement will be re-assessed regularly.

A passenger assistant is trained in first aid that is sufficient for the majority of the young people who are provided with travel assistance.

A passenger assistant is not permitted to administer any medication, with the exception of pre-loaded EpiPens® or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices. They are also trained in how to use vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) magnets, which are used by some for control of epileptic seizures.

If a young person requires a higher level of monitoring, an early accurate identification of symptoms, or personal care management, a medically trained professional, such as a nurse or health care worker may be required to accompany the young person on the vehicle. Conditions may include: severe epilepsy, glucose gel for diabetes, administration of oxygen, adrenal crisis, gastrostomy or tracheotomy tubing, shunts, suctioning, or stoma bags.

In this case, the needs of the young person will be reviewed to identify the associated risk and possible options for travel, this will be conducted by health officers, SEND Transport Service, the SEND Service and social care professionals

Medical needs and assistance

Some young people have conditions that require unique specialist support whilst travelling, unique to the individual that is necessary to maintain their safety and wellbeing throughout the journey.

To identify the appropriate level of support and expertise required of the staff accompanying the young person, then a further risk assessment may be necessary. This risk assessment will consider the medical needs of the individual, the nature of the route, and the resources and expertise available to identify the necessary arrangements required for travel.

A risk assessment will be led by health officers with contribution from the SEND Transport Service, the SEND Service, and social care professionals to ensure all needs are considered correctly, and any existing support plans are understood and considered for extension. Officers from all services will then work together to identify an appropriate support plan and to secure any necessary additional funding or resources. This will be overseen by a designated clinical officer.

Due to the likely nature of needs and associated risks during travel, it may not be possible to provide any travel assistance until the risk assessment and any follow up actions are completed.

It is generally expected that passenger assistants working on home to school or college routes will not administer any medication or perform any medical procedures on the journey to and from the education placement. In the event of an emergency, it is expected that emergency services are called to provide the necessary assistance.

Independent travel training

Local authorities have a duty to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 25 in education and training. Independent travel training aims to achieve this.

Independent travel training teaches young people a valuable skill to prepare for adulthood, 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 will work in partnership with education establishments and other individuals to identify young people who could benefit from independent travel training (ITT) and contact their families to invite them to take part in ITT. Parents of eligible young persons can also make a request.

[Further information on independent travel training](#), how it is assessed, delivered, and the benefits it provides young people.

Travel bursaries and travel reimbursement

A personal travel budget (PTB) can take one of two forms: a bursary (upfront payment) or mileage reimbursement (claimed in arrears) and These are payments which can be offered from the Council to parents, carers and young people who are eligible for travel assistance. A PTB gives some families or young people the choice and control to make their own travel arrangements to enable access education.

A **bursary** is usually paid in advance at the start of each month (11 payments per academic year) into the bank account of the parent or carer (or young person if appropriate).

The bursary is based on the young person's attendance and adjustments may be made to monthly payments if a young person does not physically attend every day during the previous months. Parents, carers or the young person will be notified of any payment adjustment for bursary payments,

Travel reimbursement claims are made in arrears, these will be adjusted to reflect any days of non-attendance.

For a bursary or travel reimbursement, where two or more children or young people live at the same address and attend the same school and the bursary or travel reimbursement has been agreed for one child or young person, additional bursary or travel reimbursement payments will not normally be provided for the other children or young people. All children or young people would be expected to travel together (absences will only be taken off if all eligible children or young people are absent).

Any arrangements made by the parents or carers using a bursary or travel reimbursement are the responsibility of the parents' or carer's young person.

Information on bursary and travel reimbursement, including how to apply for one, and how they work, can be found on the [Local Offer](#).

If the Council becomes aware of a change to the young person's circumstances that affect the individual's eligibility or value of the bursary or travel reimbursement, the Council will claim back any overpayment from the date the change in circumstances took effect.

Collection points

The Council will identify pick-up and drop-off locations for pupils to meet the bus or taxi rather than offering a door-to-door service. This reduces the time needed for the route to pick up the pupils and supports them to become more independent and better prepares them for adulthood.

Using a collection point will not be possible for some young people with the most complex SEND needs. In some cases a parent's or carer's own mobility or disability may impact on them being able to accompany their young person to a collection point. An assessment will be conducted to determine if the use of a collection point is a reasonable expectation.

Where the introduction of collection points is being considered, the Council will consult with parents, carers and the young people affected by this change in service.

Where a collection point is allocated, it is the parents' or carers' responsibility to make sure that their young person travels to and from the collection point and transfers to and from the vehicle safely.

For parents and carers who are temporarily unable to take their young person to a collection point, temporary support will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

All collection points will reflect the specific needs of the individual. Each collection point will be assessed in advanced for their suitability.

- Wherever a bus stop can be legally used as a collection point, it will be.
- Minibuses can stop to collect and drop off on yellow and double yellow lines.
- Vehicles cannot stop on white zig zags (near a zebra crossing) or school keep-clear hatchings.
- The driver always plans not to cause obstructions to other road users while making a drop off or collection and will try to stop in parking areas or bays.
- Collections or drop-off are always made kerb side.
- Each collection point is physically assessed before being used in service.
- A driver will go out and access to see if the location is safe (for example, a well-lit public location, not too close to a junction or on the brow of a hill).
- The drivers complete dynamic risk assessments at the time of collections or drop offs in the eventuality of any changes (new road layouts, another road user in the stopping space) and will slightly adjust the collection point if it is unsafe to stop.

Times of travel (school or college times)

In accordance with DfE guidance, schools are responsible for deciding when their school day will start and end. The Council will make necessary travel arrangements for eligible young people to enable them to attend at the beginning and end of the 'normal' school or college day.

Where particular classes, year groups or pupils have a start or finish time that is different from most pupils at the school or college, it will not normally be possible for the Council to make separate travel arrangements. In this event, schools or colleges may be required to make their own travel arrangements to accommodate these pupils.

Where a young person is attending on a part time or reduced timetables to support transition to a new setting then the school or college must contact the SEND Transport Service in advance. It will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This is normally only possible where a young person is not travelling on a shared route.

Learning at alternative sites, locations or link placements

Where a young person is educated on multiple or split sites (operated by the school or college), the assessment of eligibility and any subsequent travel arrangements will be based on the address used to secure the post-16 placement, regardless of which year groups are educated at which site or which site a young person might attend.

Schools or colleges organising education at alternative locations (including link placements) or away from the location used to secure a school place, will be responsible for making any additional or alternative travel arrangements to accommodate the alternative location (for learning) for the young person. This also applies to Pupil Referral Units.

If the alternative provision is named in the pupil's EHCP as the nearest suitable provision, including where a young person is 'dual registered' to meet needs (section i), travel support will be considered in the same way as any other young person and in accordance with the Council's statutory obligations.

Residential placements

Travel assistance will normally only be provided to help the young person attend their education placement, in accordance with the funding number of days residing at the school or college. The SEND Transport Service will not provide travel assistance to parents, carers or family members who wish to visit residential schools or colleges for any reason. Travel arrangements for parents or carers for this purpose must be agreed directly with the school or college.

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

In exceptional cases, parents or carers may be provided with transport assistance to school or college once a year to attend their young person's annual review.

Weekly or fortnightly residential placements

Travel assistance will be provided to take young people to education placements at the beginning and end of the school or college week, usually on a Monday and Friday, but occasionally this can be Sunday and Friday.

Termly residential placements

Twelve single journeys from home to school or college and school or college to home will be provided each academic year. This will consist of trips required at the start and end of each term, and at other school or college closure times, such as half term breaks. Additional journeys will not be provided if the school or college is closed on a weekly or fortnightly basis, unless this is reflected in the fees paid by the Council for the school or college placement.

Fifty two week residential placements

Placements where young people live at their placement for 52 weeks a year, will not be eligible for travel assistance, as they are already living at the school or college and would only be returning home for social visits.

Respite travel

Providing travel between respite and school or college is not a statutory duty of the Council, however it is recognised that it provides valuable and necessary support to parents, carers and young people.

The Council will consider the following when determining whether support will facilitate travel between a respite placement and school or college, instead of the young person's home address.

- Whether the respite location is inside the young person's home borough.
- Whether changes to existing travel arrangements (to or from respite) will incur any additional cost.
- Whether changes to existing travel arrangements will adversely affect the pick-up and drop off times, or journey times for other young people sharing the travel arrangements

Where the answer to any of the listed considerations is no, or where provision of transport is no longer working, parents or carers will need to discuss alternative travel options with the young person's social care team.

Passenger code of conduct

It is expected that all young people using the service display appropriate behaviour whilst using the services provided by the Council, as poor behaviour can affect the attention of the driver.

Young people with special educational needs, disability or mobility problems may demonstrate behaviours as part of their additional needs, for example it may be a consequence of frustration as a result of communication difficulties. These needs and circumstances will be taken into consideration in the event of an incident taking place and as part of any investigation or review.

It is expected that the Council, school, college, parent or carer would work together to identify suitable strategies of support to effectively manage any challenging behaviour that may be presented whilst young people travel to school or college.

This includes the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) with audio recording or global positioning systems (GPS) which may be used on some vehicles. 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.

If the behaviour of a young person becomes unmanageable or presents significant safety risks, it may be necessary to issue fixed periods of exclusion or permanent exclusion from transport. This decision would only be taken as a last resort, and the school or college, transport providers and parents or carers may be consulted. Parents and carers (or the young person) will be responsible for travel arrangements 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. If an incident occurs then a personal travel budget may be offered, which would be decided on a case-by-case basis.

To mitigate potential triggers that may influence changes in behaviour, the Council will aim to provide consistent travel arrangements, and if any change can be identified in advance, it will try to inform everyone affected at the earliest opportunity. It is important to acknowledge that some changes are unavoidable and may take effect with minimal advance notification.

The types of behaviours typically identified as unacceptable include (but not limited to):

- being rude, offensive or abusive to the crew, other passengers, or members of the public
- pushing and kicking
- bullying
- distracting the driver
- refusing to wear a seatbelt or remain seated
- endangering the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others
- using a mobile device or tablet to record other individuals within the vehicle without permission or consent
- exhibiting inappropriate behaviour
- absconding from the vehicle
- smoking (to include vaping or e-cigarettes)

The Council will work with schools, colleges, transport providers, young people and their families to ensure appropriate measures are in place to manage unacceptable behaviour where it occurs. This may include the introduction of seating plans or other support strategies for the young person.

In some cases, it may be necessary to take appropriate action. This will depend on the special educational needs of the young person, the circumstances of the behaviour issue and consultation with the school, college and other parties. The procedure will be as follows.

Stage 1	First Incident	First written warning
Stage 2	Second Incident	Final written warning
Stage 3	Third Incident	Permanent exclusion from transport services
At any stage	Physical abuse	Instant exclusion from transport services pending investigation

Applying for travel assistance or support

All requests for travel assistance for young people with SEND must be made by parents or carers (or the young person if appropriate) via an [online application form](#) on the [Main SEND Transport page on the Local Offer website](#). All other requests must be made through the submission of an application via the Pupil and Student Finance, and School Travel Grant webpages on the Council website.

Alternative formats of this policy and application form are also available in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's Equality and Diversity policy.

Where a young person has an EHCP, the SEND Service is required to provide a separate referral to the SEND Transport Service to confirm the basis of the young person's placement and that it is the nearest suitable education placement identified by the Council to meet the young person's educational needs.

The Council will look to complete the assessment of applications in a timely fashion, aiming to put in place travel arrangements for those entitled at the earliest opportunity. However, it may take up to 12 working days to process and families should be prepared to make their own interim travel arrangements if necessary.

While an application is being processed, parents or carers will be responsible for making their own travel arrangements. The Council will not compensate parent or carers during the assessment process for any costs incurred.

During periods of high demand, such as the build-up to the new academic year, timescales for processing applications may be extended. Families are advised to apply for support with travel before any published deadline and at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure arrangements are in place when they are required.

The SEND Transport Service will endeavour to ensure travel arrangements are in place as quickly as possible. There may be instances where the setting up of travel arrangements may take a longer time to establish due to the specific complex needs or circumstances of a young person and the specialist support they require whilst travelling. Circumstances that may cause a delay include: where a young person has a wheelchair that hasn't been crash-tested or specific medical needs that require very specialist or skilled support.

To try and reduce any disruption to the service and inform effective planning. The Council are implementing cut off dates for applications to guarantee travel for September.

Applications received after the cut off dates will still be processed, and travel assistance put in place as quickly as possible, however there is no guarantee it will be ready for the start of the academic year. These arrangements may be interim or temporary solutions and will be subject to review or change.

Cut-off or deadline dates will be published well in advance via the Council's Local Offer, which is available on AfC's website. SEND will communicate with parents and carers directly via mail or email informing them of the exact dates.

Named education placement in education, health and care plan

This section refers to how the SEND Service (distinct from the SEND Transport Service) will name an education placement in a young person's education, health and care plan and what they will take into consideration.

In most cases, the nearest suitable placement will be identified and named by the Council in a young person's EHCP.

But where a young person with special educational needs, disability or mobility problems, has an active EHCP, the parents or carer have a right to ask for a particular placement to be named in their young person's plan.

During the process of naming the placement and finalising the plan, the Council will consider whether the young person may be eligible for travel support and how travel arrangements may be provided. Formal travel assistance eligibility will be undertaken by the SEN Transport Service after the EHCP is finalised and an application for travel has been submitted.

The Council will also consider the impact of the journey and the young person's ability to learn on arrival. If the journey could have a negative impact on the young person, the Council will need to consider mitigations to minimise impact and whether the placement remains appropriate for the young person due to the potential impact.

The Council will also take into account the cost of travel when determining whether naming a particular placement would be compatible with the most efficient use of council resources. This is in accordance with the need identified in the government's SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time (March 2023) to ensure long-term financial sustainability of the Council's finances.

If it is identified that providing travel to the parents' or carers' preferred placement would be unsuitable for the young person (age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs), incompatible with efficient education of others or the efficient use of resources, the Council may name the nearer placement (that can also meet the young person's educational needs).

If, as above, the parents' or carers' preferred placement is identified as an inefficient use of resources, the Council may still name the parents' or carers' preferred placement on condition that parents are responsible for arranging and funding all transport to and from the placement for the young person's duration at that placement.

Home address and shared custody arrangements

A young person's home is the place where they habitually and normally live. When assessing eligibility and making travel arrangements, this will be the primary home address recorded with the school or college (when securing the education placement) and in accordance with any benefits received on behalf of the young person.

Where a young person lives between addresses an equal amount of time (shared custody), the residence located closest to the education placement that the young person attends will be

considered the primary residence. In these cases, if a young person is eligible for support, then the Council is not expected to provide travel to and from two separate addresses.

Change of young person's circumstances

It is the responsibility of parents, carers or young person to inform the SEND Transport Service immediately of any changes in circumstances to the original application. Failure to do so may result in existing travel support being suspended or terminated.

The Council will also perform routine checks throughout the year. If it is identified circumstances have changed without parents or carer informing the Council, any existing support may be stopped immediately if the change in circumstances means that the young person no longer meets the agreed eligibility criteria.

If a young person moves home, a new assessment will be undertaken to establish if eligibility criteria continues to be met. The outcome of the assessment will come into immediate effect.

Review of young person's needs and ongoing support suitability

The Council will undertake regular reviews of support and individual eligibility to ensure any provision continues to be appropriate for the individual passengers, is financially sustainable for the Council that eligibility thresholds continue to be met, and any provision continues to support the development of independence. There is no guarantee that travel support will continue to be provided in the future, as it will continue to reflect the needs and circumstances of the individual and whether assistance continues to be necessary.

Guidance provided by AfC to schools or colleges states that they should review each pupil's transport needs at least once a year and advises that this could be completed as part of the annual review process for pupils with EHCPs.

Where a change to existing travel arrangements is identified by the school, college or the SEND Transport Service, the Council will inform the parent, carer or young person of any proposed changes and timescales as well as the reasons for the decision. The Council will aim to provide a suitable time frame to support individual transition to the new travel arrangements for each young person. Each transition period will reflect the individual needs, circumstances of the young person, and the significance of the change.

Travel support may also be reviewed and changed to reflect any changes in government guidance and or legislation.

Provision of false or inaccurate information

When submitting an application, the parent, carer or young person will sign a declaration confirming the accuracy of the information. The parent, carer or young person are also under a duty to notify the Council of any changes in circumstances.

If it later transpired that the information is incorrect or updated information has not been provided, then notice will be given and the travel support will stop immediately.

The Council will also take steps to recover the cost of travel support provided as a result of this inaccurate information. If the information has been provided fraudulently, the Council's corporate

anti-fraud team will investigate to determine whether a criminal prosecution should be commenced.

Special considerations and appeals

Parents, carers, or the young person may wish to appeal a decision about one of the following:

- their young person's eligibility
- the travel arrangements offered

On receipt of the assessment outcome letter, parents, carers or the young person are invited to email the SEND Transport Service to submit their stage one appeal (request review of decision by a senior officer).

During the appeal process about an application for travel support, travel arrangements will not be provided to the young person. Where the appeal concerns a change to existing travel arrangements, then the previously agreed travel arrangements will continue until the review is complete.

The Council operates a two-stage appeal process as detailed below (and the following flow diagram).

Stage one: Review by a senior officer

- Parents, carer or young person have 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's travel support decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parents, carers or young person believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and family circumstances the parents or carers believe should be considered when the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of the parents, carers or young person's written request, a senior officer should complete a review of the original decision and send the parents or carers a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review. The senior officer may request supporting evidence to be able to review your case fully.

Stage two: Review by an independent appeal panel

- Parents, carers or the young person have 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents', carers' or the young person's request, an independent appeal panel considers written and verbal representations from the parents, carers or the young person, and officers involved in the case and gives a detailed written notification of the outcome (within five working days).

The stage two appeal panel will include council members. Members are currently appointed each year by annual Council to the home to school travel appeals panel.

Flowchart of the Appeals Process

