

# London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Transport Policy and Policy Statement 2020/21

Post-16 (16 to 19) without SEND

Post-16 (16 to 19) with SEND

Post-19 (19 to 25) with SEND

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement - Academic Year 2020/21 Transport policy statement for young people aged 16-18 in further education, and continuing learners who start their course before their 19th birthday.

**Department Responsible:** SEND Transport Service

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This Transport policy statement also relates to those young people aged 19 to 25 years (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

**Department Responsible:** Richmond Adult Learning Disability Service

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## Introduction

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

## Policy statement

The annual statement must state to what extent the arrangements include arrangements for facilitating attendance of disabled persons and persons with learning difficulties or disabilities at education or training.

‘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 and 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 years.

This policy, for ease, will separate the support which can be offered to post-16 young people into two categories, as the duties on the local authority to provide transport differ, and we want to make this transparent:

‘Post-16’ will include both learners of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 19 (the academic year in which they turn 19) or learners over 19 completing courses started before they turned 19.

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

This policy document specifies the support that Richmond Borough (the Council) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

All young people in Year 11 receiving SEN travel assistance must reapply for travel support for their post-16 education or training.

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, 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

The council has the following aims and objectives when assessing transport or travel support.

The SEN Code of Practice states that ‘providers should enable children and young people to have the information and skills they need to help them gain independence and prepare for adult life’. This means preparing young people, wherever possible, for independent living, employment and for being as healthy as possible in their adult lives. The objective for the home to school travel service is to support children and young people with SEND to work towards independent living wherever this is possible because of the benefits that this brings in adulthood in terms of where they live, enjoying time with friends, taking part in social and leisure activities, studying, training and employment. This approach recognises that it is beneficial for independent travel skills to be developed from the earliest opportunity, so that young people are supported to build up their competence and confidence in their approach to adulthood.

We recognise that achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some children and young people with the most complex SEND needs. Where this is the case, the objective for the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own young people’s transport where this is desired and appropriate.

The Post-16 Home to School Travel Policy will be focused upon a needs-led approach in which the individual needs of each young person are assessed to inform the appropriate form of travel support, as we move away from an approach of blanket and standard provision in favour of a policy which recognises that young people are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than pupils of statutory school age.

## Transport and travel support

### Concessionary tickets for young people aged 16 to 25 years 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 our transport services with a Zip Oyster photocard.

- 50% off adult fares on bus, Tube, DLR, London Overground, TfL Rail and most National Rail services
- If you live in London, you get free travel on buses and trams

- Child rate 7 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 percent 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 day.

For more information, please follow the link below <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/18-plus-student-oyster-photocard>

### **Apprentice Oyster photocard**

If you're 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.

- Get 30% off 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>

### **16 to 25 Railcard**

Students can also purchase a 16 to 25 Railcard for a one off cost of £30. This gives them a third off rail fares. If a student has a 16 to 25 railcard and they travel on the train at or before 10am Monday to Friday (except during July and August) a minimum fare will apply.

For more information, please follow the link below [www.16-25railcard.co.uk](http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk)

### **Disabled persons railcard**

Students may be entitled to apply for a disabled person's railcard, which would provide 1/3 discount on train travel anywhere in the country, any time of day, for themselves and a friend, if they:

- receive Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at either:

- 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 or Severe Disablement Allowance
- 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 below

[www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI5KDG55XF4QIVYrXtCh1frgVOEAAAYASAAEgKUhfD\\_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI5KDG55XF4QIVYrXtCh1frgVOEAAAYASAAEgKUhfD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds)

## Travel support from education and training providers

### The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Learners may be able to access some funding towards transport costs directly from individual education and training providers, from 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. Each learning provider has some discretionary funding that can be used for this purpose, subject to their own criteria. Resources are limited so learners should make an application to their school or college as early as possible in the academic year.

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 below:

- 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



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 2020 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 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

Education and training providers 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/](http://www.gov.uk/) search for post-16 bursaries.

### **Young parents or 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](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim)

## Local authority home to school transport support

### Students without an EHCP aged 16 to 19 years

#### Local authority support for young people without special educational needs or disabilities

Travel awards for 16 to 19 year olds without special educational needs are designed to enable and/or support attendance at state maintained school and academy sixth forms or further education colleges, and would be in the form of a grant.

#### About the grant: 2020/21 policy

Grants are payable in three termly instalments to eligible students, including those who express preference for travelling from home to school or college by bicycle, appropriate to the number of Greater London travel zones of their journeys, as follows:

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

If eligible students attend specialist courses (which are not available locally) at education or training providers at a considerable distance from home and they consequently incur annual travel costs that exceed the maximum amount available, the authority will provide Learner Support Fund grants, subject to availability at the time of application, to cover the additional costs.

#### Eligibility criteria

Grants are available for Richmond Borough residents who:

- are 16 or over and under 19 at the start of the academic year in which the course begins
- attending on a full-time basis either Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College, Richmond upon Thames College or the further education college nearest to home that offers the chosen course (allowance will be made for preference for a college that suits the needs of students with disabilities or learning difficulties and the needs of those of particular religions or denominations) or continuing state-maintained religious or denominational school sixth form
- the distance from home to school/college, measured by the shortest route by road and publicly-maintained footpaths, is more than three miles; or they have disabilities and/or learning difficulties)
- they, or their families, are receiving one of the following benefits: Income Support; **or** Jobseeker's Allowance (Income-based), **or** Universal Credit, **or** Child Tax Credit, but who are not also receiving Working Tax Credit and who have an annual taxable income of less than £16,190, **or** Working Tax Credit, **or** financial support, in accordance with Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) or the Council's Asylum and Resettlement Team

- The school or college attended is not accessible within a timetabled journey of less than one hour by buses on which the Transport for London free travel concession for under-19 year olds applies throughout the whole bus journey(s).
- Here is the link to the application form:  
[www.richmond.gov.uk/media/11181/form\\_trav\\_16\\_july\\_10.pdf](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/11181/form_trav_16_july_10.pdf)
- For more information about the discounted travel options which are available, please refer back to section Transport and travel support.

### **Assistance in exceptional circumstances**

The local authority has the discretion to provide financial assistance for travel to 16 to 19 year olds in education and training in exceptional circumstances, which may be social, medical, financial, or other, but which cause significant disadvantage to attendance at school or college and which fall outside the eligibility criteria of the policy. Circumstances that could fall within this category include:

- sudden, significant change of financial circumstances
- living, or having been, in public care
- receiving assistance from Richmond's People with Learning Difficulties Service
- being known to the AfC's Youth Offending Service
- relocation due to domestic violence
- change of school/college following exclusion
- any of these - or other significantly disadvantageous - circumstances for students

You should note, however, that this list is not exhaustive. Applicants who feel that they have any such circumstances should provide full details on their application forms and provide any relevant documents that can support their case. Applications that outline exceptional circumstances will be considered on their own merits by a senior Local Authority officer and discretion may be given. Successful applicants at this stage will be awarded grants at values to be determined by the senior officer. Applicants who are refused at this stage will be given the right of appeal to the Pupil and Student Support Appeals Panel (see below).

### **Right to appeal**

Applicants who do not meet the policy criteria, and whose circumstances are not deemed to justify the awarding of support at the 'discretion' stage (above), have the right to appeal against the local authority's refusal of assistance with home to school travel costs. Unsuccessful applicants will automatically be notified of the appeal procedure. Appeals are heard on a quarterly basis by the Council's Pupil and Student Support Appeals Panel, which is made up of four elected councillors and one parent-governor representative, and are treated on their own merits. Applicants who are successful at the appeal stage will be awarded grants at values to be determined by the Appeals Panel.

## **Local authority support for Learners with an education health or care plan, aged 16 to 19\* years**

(\*up to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 or learners completing a course commenced before age 19)

### **Aims and objectives**

The council has the following aims and objectives when assessing transport or travel support:

The SEN Code of Practice states that ‘providers should enable children and young people to have the information and skills they need to help them gain independence and prepare for adult life’. This means preparing young people, wherever possible, for independent living, employment and for being as healthy as possible in their adult lives.

The objective for the home to school travel service is to support children and young people with SEND to work towards independent living wherever this is possible because of the benefits that this brings in adulthood in terms of where they live, enjoying time with friends, taking part in social and leisure activities, studying, training and employment. This approach recognises that it is beneficial for independent travel skills to be developed from the earliest opportunity, so that young people are supported to build up their competence and confidence in their approach to adulthood.

We recognise that achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some children and young people with the most complex SEND needs, and where this is the case, the objective for the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own young people’s transport where this is desired and appropriate.

This 16 to 19 transport policy applies to young people of sixth form age with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 19 (and beyond the age of 19 if they are continuing on a particular course started before the age of 19).

Learners with special educational needs or a disability (SEND) who have an education and health and care plan (EHCP) may be eligible for support and this would be assessed under this policy.

Travel assistance for 16 to 19 year olds with special educational needs and with an EHCP are designed to enable and support attendance at educational and training placements named in the young person’s EHCP.

The guidance from the Department for Education states in their “Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training Statutory guidance for local authorities” from January 2019, the following:

The transport needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities must be reassessed when a young person moves from compulsory schooling to post-16 education, even if the young person is remaining at the same educational setting. Arrangements cannot be

limited to those young people who had been assessed as having particular transport needs prior to the age of 16. The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to publish a 'local offer' setting out their services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and this must include information on the arrangements for travel to and from post-16 institutions.

### **Eligibility criteria for post-16 travel assistance and Year 11 reassessment**

For the academic year 2020/21, in line with statutory guidance, all young people in year 11 (aged 15 to 16), moving from compulsory schooling to post-16 education, must reapply and be reassessed.

AfC will exercise its discretion to provide travel assistance for learners aged 16 to 19 with SEND where it considers that travel assistance is necessary to enable the young person to reasonably access their education or training provision specified in their EHCP. AfC is clear that as young people with SEND approach adulthood, where appropriate transport assistance will be provided to support independence.

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 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/or mobility difficulties which would impede their access to their educational placement, either independently or otherwise, for example, 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.

Where the Council agrees to provide travel assistance to a young person in post-16 education and training, the assistance will take one of the following forms.

- Reimbursement of train or tube travel costs, 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. If the family is in receipt of DLA or PIP with a mobility component or has a mobility car due to a young person's disability, this must be used for the child or young person's education transport.
- The allocation of a travel buddy equivalent to a passenger assistant to support independent travel.
- Training to travel independently (walking and using public transport, see section below).
- Training to cycle independently (reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment).
- An SEN Travel Bursary.
- The offer of funded driving lessons (where young people are of the correct age, and this is the most cost-efficient option. You can drive a car when you are 16 if you get, or have applied for, the enhanced rate of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)).
- In exceptional circumstances, provision of a local authority minibus service with or without collection points as appropriate.
- In exceptional circumstances, provision of a taxi or licensed private hire car, with or without collection points as appropriate.

The SEN Travel Bursary scheme is a discretionary offer to families, 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. It would be assessed on an individual basis. Some families have expressed concerns about the level of mileage reimbursement as they would like to make their own transport arrangements but need upfront investment to take up this option. A bursary would be agreed on a case by case individual basis upon request.

### **Targeted independent travel training for young people with SEND**

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.

Independent travel is a valuable skill for preparing 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.

As at 2019/20, Independent travel training (ITT) has been effectively delivered for five years with 92 young people having successfully completed the training, which represents an 86.7% success rate. In line with the local authority's aims and objectives to support independence and



prepare young people for adulthood, and where appropriate employment, ITT will continue to be expanded as an option.

An ITT assessment will be carried out in the home, with the support of the family, to confirm the suitability of the candidate for the ITT programme, taking into account the following criteria.

- Existing level of independent travel skills.
- The age of the student.
- The distance between home and the student's education provision.
- The SEND of the student.
- The route which the young person would need to undertake.
- Journey times using public transport and the complexity of the journey.
- The frequency of the journeys required.

This assessment would take place before the young person undertakes the ITT program, which would last for approximately four weeks. During the programme, the young person will travel to and from their education or training provision each day with their dedicated one-to-one ITT trainer.

During the period when the young person is taking part in the ITT, this will be their designated transport assistance offer. At the end of the ITT programme, we will review the young person's progress, to decide if it is appropriate with the family for the young person to continue to travel independently. In some cases, we have found that it is not appropriate for the young person to travel independently, in which case, their previous transport offer will be reinstated. Moreover, we acknowledge in a significant minority of cases, due to the nature of the young person's SEND, that ITT is not appropriate, which is why we are adopting a targeted approach.

### **Contributions for young people with special educational needs or disabilities aged 16 to 19 years**

Local authorities are expected to target any support on those young people, and their families, who need it most, particularly those with a low income. The statutory guidance confirms that local authorities may ask learners and their parents for a contribution to transport costs and in exercising their discretion they should:

- ensure that any contribution is affordable for learners and their parents
- ensure that there are arrangements in place to support those families on low income and
- take into account the likely duration of learning and ensure that transport policies do not adversely impact particular groups. For example, as young people with special educational needs and disabilities are more likely to remain in education or training longer than their

peers, any contribution sought from these families would need to allow for the fact they may have to contribute for longer

Where a young person has been assessed as not being eligible for free 16 to 19 travel assistance, parents and young people will be given the option, where spaces are available on suitable existing SEN transport, to access a space on that transport by paying a contribution towards the cost of the transport.

This will apply therefore to young people in Year 12 in September 2020. The contributions will be dependent on the school/ college's distance from the child's home address.

Distance – single journey	Contribution – academic year
Less than 8 miles	£700
8 to 16 miles	£933
17 to 25 miles	£1,166
More than 25 miles	£1,400

For families on low incomes, in receipt of maximum working tax credit, a reduced contribution will apply. This will be done having regard to all the circumstances and on a case by case basis.

### **16-19 contribution refunds**

If a young person's contribution has been agreed and for whatever reason they do not complete that programme of study, any refund for transport will be applied at the end of the academic term in which they leave that provision. The same will apply if they are subject to an extended period of non-attendance due to ill health. However, day to day nonattendance would not be subject to a refund, this will only be agreed in the event that the young person leaves the provision or an extended period of non-attendance due to ill health.

### **Apprenticeships**

If an apprenticeship is named in a young person's EHCP, transport arrangements to support young people with an EHCP 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.

### **Short-term difficulties**

**Students receiving bus transport provision:** Where a young person receives home to school transport from a minibus 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 student's SEND has not changed, temporary physical or medical constraints make it difficult for the child to access the service.

**Students who have temporarily changed address:** Transport assistance may not be provided where a student 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 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.

### **Re-housed students**

If a family has moved to an address within a different local authority area, the responsibility for the young person's EHCP and travel assistance to their education placement transfers to the local authority area in which they are residing. This is because the family have become ordinarily resident in the new area. This is the case regardless of which local authority is paying the family's housing costs and regardless of whether the family intend to move back to Richmond in the future.

### **Dual and link placements and inclusion**

Dual placements are where a student attends more than one education or training provider. Dual placements may require additional transport assistance, such as transport at earlier or later times, or during the school or college day. The student's school or college is responsible for arranging and paying for the cost of such transport. Where a young person is on roll at one school or college but visits another school or college for inclusion or link purposes, the school or college where the student is usually based will be responsible for arranging and paying for transport.

### **Residential education and training providers**

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

Transport assistance for any students attending termly boarding school or college placements will not exceed the 12 one way journeys. If the school or college is closed on a weekly or fortnightly basis, this must be reflected in the fees being paid by the local authority for the 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 education and training providers 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.

Young people whose parents or carers wish to accompany them on the first day at school or college will 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.

### **Nearest suitable placement**

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

Young people may express a preference for any maintained school or any form of academy or free school or further education college they wish to attend. If a young person does express a preference to attend a school or college further away than the nearest suitable school or college, then the Council reserves the right to refuse transport assistance to that school or college.

### **Applying for transport support**

You can apply for post-16 (16-19) SEND transport services using our online form.

[www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/send\\_transport/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/send_transport/)

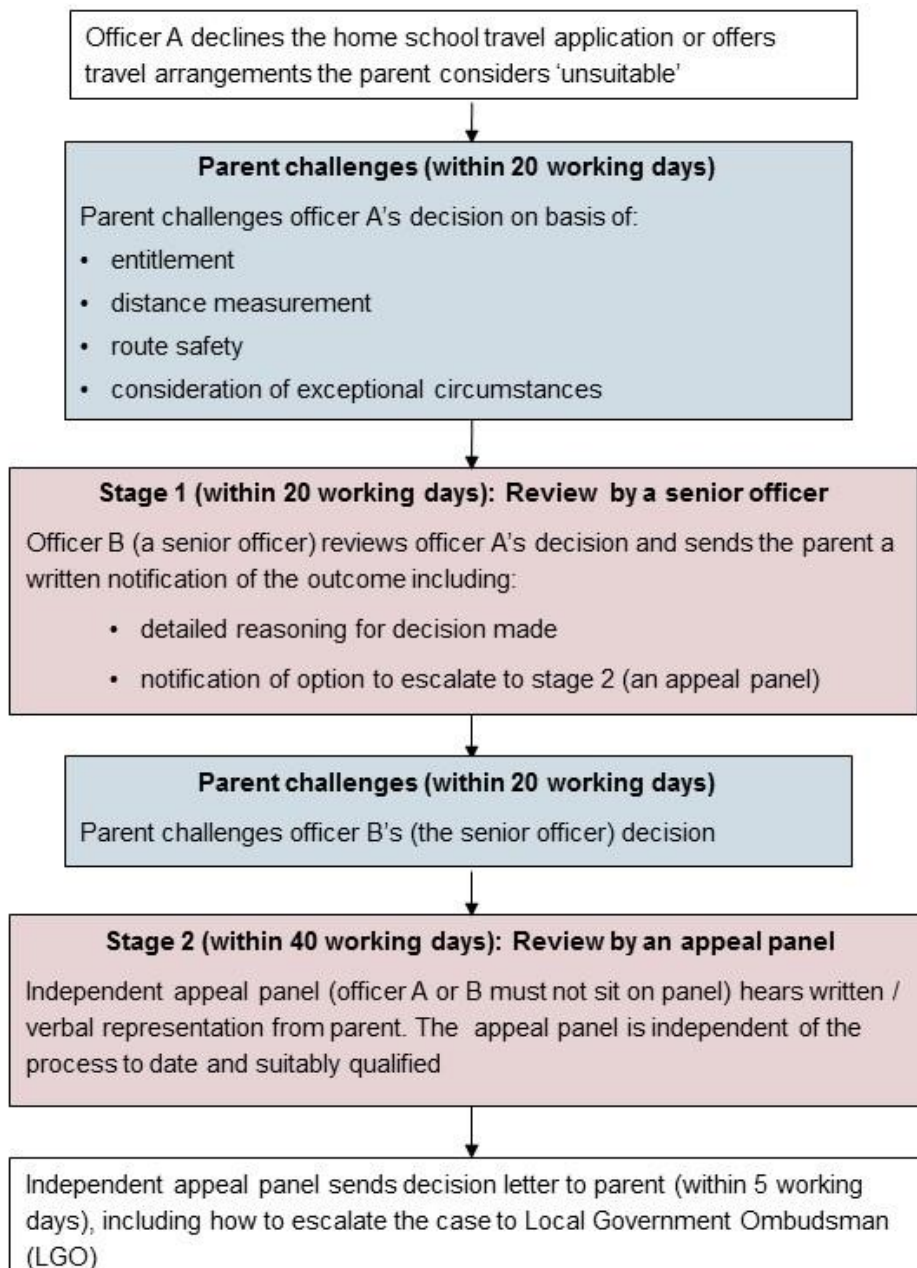
This application form is for use by families in Richmond boroughs when applying for SEND transport assistance from Achieving for Children. If you have any questions about completing this application, or if you have already submitted an application and wish to make a follow up enquiry please contact the SEND Transport team on 020 8547 4708.

### **Appeals**

If AfC, declines a request for transport assistance, the young person and their 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 young person. Where the appeal concerns a change to transport arrangements for a young person who has previously been assessed as eligible, then the previously agreed transport arrangements will continue.

The appeal process is outlined below:



In line with national guidance, the independent appeals panel referred to in the flowchart will, in Richmond, be made up of a group of councillors who will be assembled once a Stage 2 appeal has been submitted.

### 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 education and training providers states that they should carefully review each student's individual transport needs at least once per year and advises that this could be completed as part of the annual review for students with EHCPs. Based on the outcome of reviews, AfC will make any changes necessary to transport arrangements or travel assistance which are the result of a young person's changing needs. For example, a young person may no longer require a passenger assistant or 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 young person's education or training provider. Once a student has been assessed as being 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.

### **Transport management**

If the Council agrees to provide transport by minibus or taxi, it will ordinarily take up to 12 working days to arrange but may be faster when a young person is being added to an existing route with space. 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 student's needs, obtain quotes for the transport provider, and ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place.

Young people and/or their 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. Young persons and/or their 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 young people onto or off transport. Parents, carers and education and training providers are also not permitted to lift young people 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 young person during a journey. In these circumstances, parental mileage reimbursement may be given as an alternative.

Individual transport will not be provided. Young people must expect to travel to and from their education provider with other students and young people unless there are exceptional circumstances where it would not be reasonable to expect a young person to do so and increasingly they may be asked to travel to a designated collection point.

### **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 or student
- the distance between home and the young person's education or training provision
- information provided on the transport assessment form
- the SEND of the pupil or student
- the number of other pupils and students 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 the factors listed in the above paragraph to make its decision.

Transport is co-ordinated and managed by the SEND Transport Service in AfC on behalf of the Council. Each transport provider (whether taxi or minibus) will also have a nominated controller who is the first point of contact for education and training providers, parents and carers, and who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service.

Closed-circuit television (CCTV) with audio recording or global positioning systems (GPS) may be used on some 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.

### **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 pick-up points will usually be those specified on the EHCP (normally the home and education provider address), or 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 student.

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 young person's eligibility for transport assistance.

### **Collection points**

Collection points are similar to bus stops, where we identify designated pick-up/drop-off locations for the student 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 students, allows us to allocate more passengers to each route, and (in line with our broader aims) supports children and young people to become more independent and better prepares them for adulthood.

Collection points may be introduced on some routes, where the pupils and students are able to walk to improve the efficiency of the route and reduce the time needed for the route to collect the students. Where the introduction of collection points is being considered, AfC will formally carry out a 28 day consultation with the parents and carers already on those routes affected by this potential change in service. Achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some children and young people with the most complex SEND needs, and in some cases parents' own mobility or disability may impact them being able to accompany their child to a collection point; where this is the case, the ambition for the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own children's transport where this is desired and appropriate. In such circumstances, AfC will carefully consider and assess the individual child's needs as well as the mobility and or disability of their parents.

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 and transfers to and from the vehicle safely.

**Parents and carers 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 their education provider by a private bus company. This is because the young person's special educational need or disability has not changed and the transport service from the collection point is still available.

All collection points will be within a one mile walking distance of the home, and 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 red routes; white zig zags (near a zebra crossing) or school keep-clear hatchings.
- We always plan not to cause obstructions to other road users whilst making a drop off or collection and try to stop in parking areas or bays.
- Ensure collections or drop-offs, are always made kerb side.
- Each collection point is physically assessed prior to being used in service, a driver will go out and test to see if they feel the location is safe (for example, a well-lit public location, not too close to a junction or on the brow of a hill etc.)
- 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.

### **Timing**

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



Where young people are picked up or dropped-off at home, the parent or carer is responsible for accompanying the young person 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 young person 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 young people 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 young person on the transport, pupils and students 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 young person, 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 or afternoon. If the controller is unable to make direct contact with the parent or carer, the driver is instructed to leave that pickup/drop-off point and move onto the next point. Should the transport move on without the young person in the morning, transport to school or college will then become the responsibility of the parent or carer for that individual journey. If the parent or carer is unavailable to receive the student in the afternoon, the young person 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 young person, 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 young person's home. In these cases, parents and carers are required to walk with the young person to the safest nominated collection point, as specified by the transport provider.

## **Absences**

Where a young person cannot attend their education provision 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 the young person will be unwell on the following day.

Alternatively, they should contact the transport provider as early as possible on the morning of travel if the young person only shows signs of being unwell on the day he or she is 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 young person boards the vehicle. Where parents or carers repeatedly fail to cancel transport provision for the young person before it arrives at the home address, or where a young person 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 young person'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, young people 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.

### **Parent or carer not at home**

Transport providers are instructed to take children and young people to the nearest place of safety, which is the Children and Family Services Centre, in the event that a parent or carer is unable to meet the young person at the specified drop-off point at the specified time. Social care services may be notified and/or transport assistance withdrawn if this happens frequently. Parents, carers or education providers 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 education providers if there are going to be any foreseen delays to the delivery of the service.

### **Parents and carers with other commitments**

It is not possible to take into account family circumstances when allocating pick-up and drop-off times for pupils and students. 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 and students 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 and students 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 the morning journey, they should assume that transport will also be cancelled for the afternoon journey, unless they are advised otherwise. If parents or carers decide to take the young person to school or college despite the severe weather, they will also need to arrange to collect the young person after school or college.

## **Safety assessments**

Where the Council and AfC agree to provide either minibus transport or taxi transport for a young person, it may be necessary to complete a safety assessment of the young person's physical and medical needs. Until this safety assessment is completed, transport between home and the young person's education provision will be the responsibility of the parents or carers.

Some young people 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 young person'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 the young person 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 and students 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 young person or parent or carer, as part of their application, is required to provide detailed information directly to the SEND Transport Service about the young person's SEND and medical needs. This information forms the basis of the young person's transport plan. In some cases, where a young person 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 young person 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 or carer, to accompany the young person on the vehicle. A risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure the correct level of medical support can be arranged.

### Behaviour standards

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

In consultation with the young person’s education provider, it may be necessary to issue periods of fixed or permanent exclusion from transport. Parents and carers will be responsible for transporting the young person during any period of exclusion from transport.

Where an allegation of unacceptable behaviour is received (either from a parent, carer, school, college or transport provider), the young person 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 or college, SEND Panel and other parents or carers may also be consulted. Depending on the SEND of the young person, the circumstances of the behavioural problem and consultation with the school or college 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, young people 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

Young people must not:

- abscond from the vehicle
- speak in an offensive/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 young people are not on the transport. In some circumstances, a young person 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 or young person. All drivers, passenger assistants and other crew members are expected to show understanding of, and empathy with, pupils or students, their parents, carers and school or college staff. They are expected to treat all children and young people 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 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 prior to 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; and
- All taxi vehicles with eight passenger seats or less are licensed by the Public Carriage Office (PCO) and are subject to two MOT inspections per 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 or student; 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 education and training providers 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 young people to several different education and training providers, may be brought together into a single route where this is appropriate. Longer routes will be reviewed periodically with the respective education and training providers to ensure that concentration and attentiveness are not compromised by any change to passengers' 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 and young person'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 children or young people below 135cm 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 below 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 crews and vehicles 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

Every local authority has a statutory responsibility to have a designated officer who is responsible for co-ordinating 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. In the first instance, parents should make contact with the SEND Transport Service about their concerns. 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

AfC are constantly looking at ways to improve the SEND Transport Service and welcomes comments from parents, carers, young people 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 complaints procedures which are available online at [www.richmond.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/complaints)

## Equalities statement

Richmond Council 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 is 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.

## **Local authority support for Learners with special educational needs or a disability, aged 19\*-25 years** (\*starting from the beginning of the academic year after the young person turn 19)

This section sets out the provision that the Council makes for transport for young adults (aged 19 to 25 years) with EHCPs attending maintained further education colleges or attending colleges outside the further education sector where the local authority has secured both the provision of education or training and the provision of boarding accommodation.

It also set out the assistance that the Council may provide for other adult learners with education health and care plans.

### **Aims and objectives**

The Council has the following aims and objectives when assessing transport or travel support:

The SEN Code of Practice states that ‘providers should enable children and young people to have the information and skills they need to help them gain independence and prepare for adult life’. This means preparing young people, wherever possible, for independent living, employment and for being as healthy as possible in their adult lives.

The objective for the home to school travel service is to support children and young people with SEND to work towards independent living wherever this is possible because of the benefits that this brings in adulthood in terms of where they live, enjoying time with friends, taking part in social and leisure activities, studying, training and employment. This approach recognises that it is beneficial for independent travel skills to be developed from the earliest opportunity, so that young people are supported to build up their competence and confidence in their approach to adulthood.

We recognise that achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some children and young people with the most complex SEND needs, and where this is the case, the objective for the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own young people’s transport where this is desired and appropriate.

The post-19 (19 to 25) Home to School Travel Policy will be focused upon a needs-led approach in which the individual needs of each young adult are assessed to inform the appropriate form of travel support, as we move away from an approach of blanket and standard provision in favour of a policy which recognises that young people are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than pupils of statutory school age.

The post-19 (19 to 25) transport powers held by the Council apply to young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged between 19 and 25 inclusive who have an education health and care plan.



The Council will consider whether it is necessary to provide transport for young adults with EHCPs attending maintained further education colleges or provided with residential education by the Council. In other cases, the Council consider whether to exercise its discretion to pay all or part of the reasonable travelling expenses of young adults with EHCPs provided with education by the Council.

Transport for (Year 14 and above) 19 to 25 year olds with SEND is predominantly provided by Richmond Adult Services in line with their duties and powers under the Care Act. Participation in work, education, training or recreation is one of the areas of well-being that social care supports. In these cases, the educational provision will be supported and funded by Richmond's Children Services, but transport is mainly provided by Richmond Adult Services based on their own assessment criteria and arrangements, which is subject to an assessment carried out by Adult Services.

The Council and AfC will only consider applications for transport or travelling expenses from young people aged 19 to 25 under this policy where an application has been made to Adult Services for transport assistance and this has not been agreed.

For post-19 students starting a new course, you must also evidence why it is necessary for the Council and not the student or family to make travel arrangements. To assess this, we would need to know:

- what other arrangements you have considered or tried and why they are not suitable
- if there is a family member or carer who is able to transport the student and if not, why it would not be possible or reasonable for them to do so
- 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 utilised and if there are any factors limiting its use, you should provide details of them.
- whether there is a 'motability' vehicle for which the student may or may not be the driver. If a decision has been made not to use the 'motability' vehicle to support the student to reach their education placement, we would normally expect the carer/student to make their own appropriate alternative arrangements or provide details as to why that is not possible/reasonable
- any other exceptional circumstances that you consider need to be taken into account and the Council consider any recent supporting evidence that you provide

Please note, we would not consider work or childcare commitments as an exceptional reason for travel assistance to be provided for any post- 16 or adult student.

Each request will be assessed on a case by case basis, considering the law, Council policy and any supporting information provided.

## **Applying for local authority transport support**

You can apply for post-19 (19 to 25) SEND transport services using our online form.

[www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/send\\_transport/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/send_transport/)

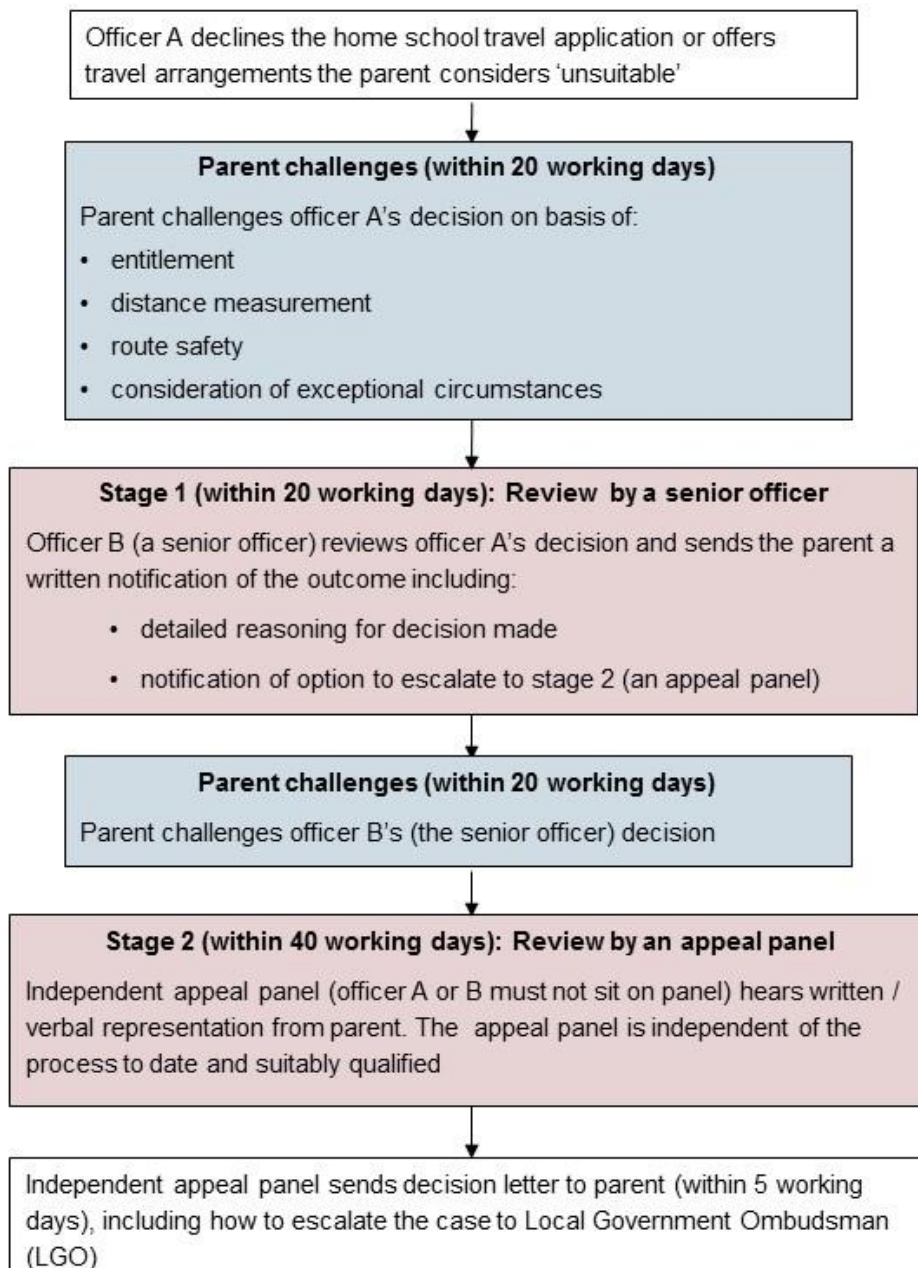
This application form is for use by families in Richmond boroughs when applying for SEND transport assistance from Achieving for Children. If you have any questions about completing this application, or if you have already submitted an application and wish to take a follow up enquiry please contact the SEND Transport team on 020 8547 4708.

## **Appeals**

If AfC, on behalf of the Council, declines a request for transport assistance, the young person'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 young person. 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 national guidance, the independent appeals panel referred to in the flowchart will, in Richmond, be made up of a group of Councillors who will be assembled once a Stage 2 appeal has been submitted.

### Comments, compliments and complaints

AfC is constantly looking at ways to improve the SEND Transport Service and welcomes comments from young people, parents, carers, young people and school or college 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 complaints procedures which are available online at [www.richmond.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/complaints)

## **Equalities statement**

Richmond Council 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 is 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.