

User Guide for parents and carers

Getting to school

Children with special
educational needs and
disabilities (SEND)



This parent guide sets out the arrangements for providing transport assistance to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

It is intended as a user guide for families where transport has already been applied for, assessed and agreed.

If you are considering applying for SEND home to school transport, while this guide will be useful, we recommend that you read the full policy on the Local Offer website.

You can view the full SEND Transport policy on the Local Offer website www.afclocaloffer.org.uk and search for SEND Transport policy.

This guide also outlines the roles and responsibilities of the local authority (LA), parents, schools and transport providers and forms part of the agreement between the child's parents and the local authority prior to any transport arrangements taking place.

Throughout this document any references to children includes young people, and references to parents or family includes carers. Kingston and Richmond councils will be referred to as 'The Council' and the local authorities will be referred to as 'The local authority'.

The front cover shows the first group of young people, who had previously been travelling on SEND transport, together with Kingston's Mayor, Roy Arora, and his wife, on 17 February 2016 after they accepted their award for completing independent travel training.

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1 Introduction

Most children are able to get to and from school by walking, cycling or using public transport. In some cases, children may share car journeys with friends and family. However, a few children will not be able to make this journey without help and the council may provide transport assistance in these cases.

The local authority promotes inclusive opportunities to enable people with additional needs to fulfil their educational and social potential. This includes joint working between pupils, parents, and the school. The local authority encourages independence wherever possible, providing transport support to pupils appropriate to their assessed needs (see section 6 for more details).

2 Our transport policy

The local authority's statutory duties and arrangements for providing SEND transport assistance are covered by the SEND Home to School Transport Policy.

You can view the full SEND Transport policy on the Local Offer website www.afclocaloffer.org.uk and search for SEND Transport policy.

Copies can also be obtained by contacting the Transport Officer, who is based at the AfC offices (see contacts at the end of this guide).

3 Transport help for children with SEND

The local authority will consider the individual needs of children following professional advice (for example, from the educational psychologist or medical officers). We may also consult with parents and teachers before arriving at a final decision. Consideration will also be given to the child's physical requirements (including any disabilities they may have). Assessment of eligibility may include face-to-face contact with the pupil, the results of which will be recorded on the transport assessment form.

If a child goes to a special school, has a statement of SEND or an education, health and care plan (EHCP), this does not automatically mean that they qualify for help with transport. We will assess each case individually.

If we provide help with transport, this does not guarantee that we will continue to do so in the future. We will make changes for the developing needs of the child, along with any changes required by local or national policy and practice. We will look at transport changes during the annual review, but also from time to time during the year.

The local authority will not provide transport assistance to help with school attendance.

Transport assistance offered may take one of the following forms:

- use of the free travel provided by TfL using an Oyster photo-card;
- provision of a TfL travel-card;
- the allocation of a travel buddy;
- training to travel independently (walking and using public transport);

- training to cycle independently (reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment);
- the offer of funded driving lessons (where pupils are of the correct age, and this is the most cost-efficient option);
- reimbursing mileage costs for parents or carers;
- provision of a private bus service; or
- provision of individual taxis or licensed private car hire (in exceptional circumstances).

4 Family circumstances and commitments

Eligibility for transport assistance is based on the child's needs. The local authority may take into account some family circumstances (for example, if a child has other siblings attending schools that are not local to the SEND provision offered to them, or if a child is offered SEND provision at a school which is not their local provision), both when considering applications for home to school travel assistance and when deciding on the type of assistance to be provided. While we would always seek to be supportive, the local authority is not able to consider other family circumstances such as parents attending work, or looking after other children not of school age.

The local authority is also not able to take into account family circumstances when allocating pick-up and drop-off times for children. The timing will be based on the most efficient route available. The efficient use of local authority resources will always take priority.

Equality is a key principle in our service. A situation could develop where a number of parents in similar family circumstances (for example, other children to take to school, or work commitments) request the same pick-up time. If the local authority were to consider requests for pick-up times from parents, then this would 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 in duration and less economical. This is also important for environmental reasons.

SEND transport assistance is awarded to children with SEND and should not be considered a service which facilitates parents' or carers' working, or looking after other children who are not yet of school age.

5 Nearest suitable school and parental preference

The nearest suitable school is one that the local authority deems to be suitable for the specific needs of the pupil.

Schedule 27 of the Education Act states that parents may express a preference for the maintained school they wish their child to attend, and the local authority must consider the parents' requests and arrange any relevant meetings before the final statement or EHCP is issued naming a school.

However, if a parent expresses a preference for their child to attend a school further away than the nearest suitable school, then the local authority reserves the right to refuse transport assistance to that school.

6 Independent travel

The Department for Education are keen to support independent travel training for all children with SEND and disabilities so that all pupils can benefit from public transport. Local authorities also 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.

We believe that, where possible, independent travel is a valuable life skill and an essential employability skill, providing greater opportunities for young people, not least increasing confidence in their abilities and reducing their sense of reliance on family members, while at the same time providing pupils with many of the skills necessary for later employment.

Schools are responsible for providing independent travel training to children with SEND, where appropriate. In some cases, it may be possible for a member of school staff to initially travel with children on public transport, to increase their awareness and travel skills. However, this is heavily dependent on the resources available to each school and is not guaranteed. In some exceptional cases, AfC may be able to offer places on tailored Independent travel courses.

We encourage all parents to work with schools and AfC to promote independent travel training for their children, where appropriate.

As part of this, transport arrangements may include collection points that may not be the home address (see section 16 for more details).

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

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

7 Pupils outside the statutory school age

The local authority does not have a statutory duty to help pupils who are not within statutory school age. Statutory school age is between 5 years old and the last day of the school year when a child reaches 16. However, there are special circumstances when we may consider transport help. For further information, please see the SEND Home to School Transport Policy.

8 Transport management

Transport is co-ordinated and managed by the local authority's Transport Officer. Each transport provider (whether taxi or private bus) will also have a nominated controller who is the first point of contact for schools and parents and who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service. For contact telephone numbers, please see the letter sent to you at the start of your transport arrangement and the end of this document.

If you have any queries, regarding any transport arrangements in place for your child, please check with the relevant transport controller for the company providing their transport.

9 Transport arrangements

If we agree to provide help, we may offer one of the following:

- free travel, using a Transport for London (TfL) Child Oyster Photocard, on TfL public buses;
- a train pass or travelcard for your child to use on public transport;
- allocation of a travel buddy;
- training to travel independently (walking and using public transport);
- training to cycle independently (reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment);
- the offer of funded driving lessons (where pupils are of the correct age, and this is the most cost-efficient option);
- reimbursement of mileage costs if you take your child to school;
- a place for your child on a private bus service; or
- in some exceptional circumstances, a place for your child in a taxi or a private-hire car.

We will not provide separate taxis and children will travel with others unless there are exceptional circumstances. The local authority will allocate transport in the most cost-effective manner.

When we receive your application, transport will ordinarily take between six and 12 working days to arrange, and in some special cases may take longer (for example, where there is a need for a specialist vehicle or we need to carry out a special assessment of your child's needs). We aim to send you details of the transport arrangements, in writing before the arrangements start.

Availability of transport is not always guaranteed due to the specialised nature of some transport needs. During any period when transport cannot be provided, the local authority would normally support the parents by offering a mileage reimbursement.

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

10 Staff standards

- Transport staff will be polite and make sure that passengers travel safely.
- There are consistent and pre-vetted crews on all routes.
- Drivers and passenger assistants will be trained and will have been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (formally the Criminal Records Bureau) and appropriate licences.
- All members of transport staff have received accredited emergency first-aid training, and where passengers require, accredited epilepsy and buccal midazolam training, and all training is refreshed when appropriate.

- Crew members have completed safeguarding training (for more information about our safeguarding procedures, please see the SEND Transport policy).
- The driver has ultimate responsibility for the safety of all passengers and will offer seating on this basis.

11 Transport standards

- We will provide transport in line with contractual standards and national legislation.
- All vehicles will offer standards of comfort and safety as prescribed by relevant legislation.
- All vehicles must meet a reasonable level of cleanliness and must meet expectation in terms of state of repair (all PCO vehicles are tested twice yearly).
- Regular audit checks will be carried out on all vehicles (including checks on insurance), and regular audit checks will also be carried out on the transport providers (when other aspects of the service, such as data protection, are assessed).
- All transport must be equipped with appropriate restraints for the passengers.
- The vehicle should be on time, wherever possible.

12 Passenger assistants

Some children need an adult to accompany them on their journeys to and from school. We will consider the needs of the child when deciding whether a passenger assistant is needed and if we consider that a child needs a passenger assistant, it may be practical for parents to accompany their children (parents will not be paid for this).

There is no minimum or maximum age that determines whether a passenger assistant will be automatically provided and the local authority will look at age in conjunction with many other factors in arriving at its decision, including:

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

If we initially recommend a passenger assistant, this does not guarantee that we will continue to do so in the future. The requirement will be re-assessed in the pupil's annual review, from time to time during the year and in the event of any change in circumstances. We will also make any changes required by local or national policy and practice.

13 Continuity

We recognise that, for some children with SEND, change can be unsettling. As a result, we will make every effort to ensure that the same passenger assistant and/or driver is used on a regular basis. However, this will not always be possible (for example, due to illness, holiday entitlement, training attendance, etc) and changes may need to be made from time to time to ensure the most efficient use of available resources. The local authority will always try to provide as much notice as possible as we realise that this may cause anxiety for some children with SEND.

All parents and schools are advised to expect that some journeys will not be carried out by the same team as normal (for the reasons listed above). In these cases, parents or schools must ensure that they take the name of the new passenger assistant and/or driver, ask to see their identification, and call into their transport company's headquarters to verify that person's identity.

In addition, the local authority has a duty to spend public funds in the most appropriate and cost effective way. Routes will be reviewed regularly (particularly during the summer holidays) and separate routes, taking children to several nearby schools, may be brought together into one route where appropriate. These longer, larger routes will be reviewed periodically with the respective schools to ensure that concentration and attentiveness are not compromised by any change to the journey. Where we have a change to the transport provider, we cannot guarantee the same passenger assistant and/or driver will be used.

14 Assessments

If the local authority agrees to provide either private bus transport or taxi transport for a child, it may be necessary to complete an assessment of this child's physical and medical needs on board transport. Until this assessment is completed, transport between home and school will be the responsibility of the parents or carers.

In addition, some children with SEND have physical and medical conditions which deteriorate over time. If, at any point, it is felt by the local authority's Transport Manager and/or Transport Officer that a further assessment may be necessary to ensure that a child's physical and medical needs are being met on board transport, the local authority reserves the right to plan and complete another assessment which may involve input from other professionals. Until the date of this assessment and recommendations from the assessment are complete, it will be the responsibility of the parents to transport the child between home and school. As a result of an assessment of this type, it may be necessary to make changes to transport provision (for example, to safety and support equipment used on board or to resources on board transport).

15 Medication on board transport

All members of transport staff have received accredited emergency first-aid training and this is refreshed when appropriate to avoid skills fade.

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

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

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

Please be aware that, as part of this application, where a child may require emergency medication, we would require confirmation from parents of the medication and dosage and an explicit confirmation that the parents agree to the passenger assistant providing these medications (where they can be administered using pre-loaded dosers) in an emergency, if needed. This information forms the basis of the pupil's transport plan. In some cases, where a child has very specific and complex needs, an additional care plan from medical professionals may be required.

Members of transport staff aren't allowed 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.

Where passengers require, accredited training to administer medication from pre-loaded devices will be provided and this training is refreshed when appropriate.

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

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

16 Pick-up and drop-off arrangements

To make sure that children are safe, transport providers can make pick-ups and drop-offs at agreed points only. This may be a bus stop, collection point or, in some special cases, the home address. This will have been confirmed to you when your child's transport arrangements were initially set up.

If you want to change your child's pick-up or drop-off point (either temporarily or permanently), you must apply to us in writing, either via email or letter.

16.1 Pick-up and drop-off points (from collection point)

Where a child has been allocated a collection point for as their pick-up and drop-off point, this has been done for several reasons:

- to encourage and maintain independent travel for children wherever possible;
- to minimise the journey durations for children travelling on these routes; and
- to ensure that the route taken is the most efficient.

There will still be some children for whom this collection point arrangement is not appropriate and we will ensure that these children are picked up from, and returned to, their home address (for example, those children who have a physical disability or a special educational need which would make accessing the collection point impossible). See section (16.2) below, for more information about home collections.

The age of a child will not be a determining factor in our assessment of whether a child is eligible for home pick-ups and drop-offs, since the local authority would expect parents or guardians to accompany their child(ren) to and from the collection point.

With regards to the timings and arrangements of pick-ups and drop-offs, under the policy we cannot take parental and family circumstances into account. This includes whether a parent is unable to accompany a child to and from their collection point due to work commitments or taking another child to school. The local authority would expect parents to make suitable arrangements to provide cover in these cases.

Parents should, wherever possible, provide one alternative address (which must be within one mile from the usual address) to be used in the event that they are unable to meet their child from the collection point. This alternative address will be for emergencies only.

16.2 Pick-up and drop-off points (from home addresses)

Where a child has been allocated a home collection, this has been authorised by council officers due to the individual child's SEND and/or any physical disabilities which may severely limit their ability to access collection points.

Parents should, wherever possible, provide one alternative address (which must be within one mile from the usual address) to be used in the event they are unable to meet their child. Again, this alternative address will be for emergencies only.

For one-off changes to pick-up or drop-off points, please contact the controller of the company providing transport in writing to request the change. This change can then be authorised, where applicable, by the Transport Officer.

16.3 Timing and arrangements of pick-ups and drop-offs

You should check with the controller of the company providing transport regarding when your child will be picked up or dropped off. The time will be based on the most effective route for the vehicle.

Unfortunately, we cannot consider special requests for pick-up and drop-off times (please see section 4). This is to ensure that the routes used are the most efficient, in an attempt to cut down on travelling time, cost, pollution and to ensure that the service we provide is equal for all children and their families.

Due to changes in transport circumstances, it may be necessary for us to vary the times of pick-up and drop-off. In most cases, we will tell you five days before making any major changes.

To keep journey times down, children must be available within three minutes of the set pick-up time, or you must be available to meet your child within three minutes of the set drop-off time. We will advise the driver to leave that point and move on to the next point after three minutes. If the transport moves on without your child, you are responsible for ensuring that your child gets to school safely. If you are not available at the drop-off point on school-to-home journeys, your child will be taken to the nearest place of safety (see section 19).

If the vehicle arrives early, it will wait until the official set time and will then move on after another three minutes if your child is not available. The driver may decide to wait longer but only if this does not interfere with the timing of the onward journey.

If the vehicle arrives after the official collection time (for example, due to bad traffic or roadwork in the area), it will still wait three minutes and will only move on if you or your child are not available within this time. If the transport is already running late, the vehicle will almost certainly not wait any longer than three minutes. This is to ensure that all pupils on the vehicle arrive at school on time wherever possible and to minimise journey time.

Ongoing delays caused by parents or children may result in transport help being removed or changed.

- **If your child is being picked up or dropped off at your home address, you are responsible for accompanying your child to and from the vehicle.**
- **When the vehicle arrives, it will not sound the horn (it is against the law to sound a horn from a stationary vehicle, see Highway Code rule 112).**

The driver and passenger assistant are not permitted to leave the vehicle to knock at your house, so you should keep a lookout for when the vehicle arrives. In exceptional circumstances only (for example, if your child travels alone in a taxi), the passenger assistant may call at the door. You must agree this beforehand with the Transport Officer. The vehicle can move on after waiting for three minutes after the set pick-up or drop-off time.

16.4 Transport routes

The most cost-effective route will be used at all times. Bus stops will be used where possible to cut down on the number of stops a bus has to make. However, individual SEND or physical limitations will be taken into account and home stops may be necessary in some cases.

Routes will be reviewed regularly to take into account changes in needs and environmental pressures (for example, changes in road layouts, etc).

16.5 Journey times

We expect children to arrive at school safely and fit to learn, and we recognise that journey times should reflect this. However, traffic congestion in Kingston, Richmond and surrounding areas means that travelling times can vary greatly. You should use the following times as a guide only and take account of day-to-day traffic problems.

For children who travel to schools within inside their home borough, you should expect journeys to normally take up to one hour 15 minutes. However, this may be affected from time to time by traffic pressures and other environmental and operational conditions.

For children who travel to schools outside their home borough, the distances and journey durations vary depending on where the school is.

We will do everything we can to contact schools and parents as soon as we are aware of any major delay. Routes may also change to take account of conditions.

Journey times will be kept to a minimum if you make sure that your children are available for collection on time, and are met promptly at the end of the day.

16.6 Severe weather conditions

In severe weather conditions (for example storms, snow, etc), it may be necessary to either change or cancel transport arrangements for safety reasons.

If you are advised that transport has been cancelled for your child's morning journey, you should assume that the afternoon journey will also be cancelled unless advised otherwise by the transport provider.

Parents who have chosen to take their children to school themselves during severe weather conditions, should ensure that they have confirmed return transport arrangements for their child before leaving them at school on that day.

17 Absences

If your child is absent from school, for example due to illness, it is the parents' responsibility to contact the transport company immediately. For long term absences, please contact the Transport Officer (contact details can be found at the back of this guide).

So that the authority does not get charged for wasted journeys, we ask that all parents contact their respective transport company the night before, if they know that their children will be off ill the following day.

However, we realise that sometimes this is not possible (children often only show signs of being ill on the day they are due to travel). In these cases, the transport company should be advised as early as possible on the morning of travel.

All transport, which is not cancelled in advance of the vehicle arriving at the home address, must be paid for by the local authority, whether or not the child living at that address boards the vehicle.

Where parents repeatedly fail to cancel transport provision for their child (as a result of the child's illness) before it arrives at the home address, or where a child suddenly decides not to travel in transport which has arrived on any given day (without any prior notice having been given to the transport company), the child's transport provision will be reviewed and monitored. Consistent non-cancellation of transport provision may lead either to parents being charged for wasted journeys or the transport arrangements being switched to an 'on-demand' service, where transport will only be provided where parents telephone to request it.

If a child does not use the transport service in the morning (for any reason) and parents arrange to take their child into school themselves later that day, parents must advise the transport company that their child is now at school, so they know to provide return transport for them.

18 Permanent changes of home address

If you move home within Kingston or Richmond, please note that any change of home address should be confirmed to AfC in writing for your child's safety and so that we can continue to provide suitable transport arrangement for your child's needs.

Please also be aware that a change of address is effectively a change in circumstances, which may affect your child's eligibility for transport assistance.

If you chose to move home to another borough, please note that this new borough becomes financially responsible for your child's transport effective from the date they receive paperwork relating to your child.

The Council will work with you, where possible, to cover transport for your child until your new home borough is able to arrange transport for your child themselves.

19 The nearest place of safety

To make sure the local authority has proper arrangements in place for an emergency, you must provide written details of another responsible local person who your child knows. Details must include the emergency contact's name, full address and phone number. You must provide this before the transport can start. The emergency contact's address must be within one mile of your home address and be located within your home borough. In addition to this contact, the following procedures are in place, specific to whether your child attends an in-borough or out-borough school. **Please see page 17 of this booklet for nearest place of safety addresses.**

19.1 Children who go to schools outside the borough

If the transport calls at the authorised drop-off point and you are not available to meet your child, the transport will only wait longer than three minutes at the driver's discretion, and even then he will only do this if it does not interfere with the journey times for other children due to travel.

If the transport decides to move on from the normal drop-off point, a standard letter will be left at the authorised drop-off point (normally the home address) to inform you that your child has been taken to your nominated emergency address. This letter explains that if nobody is available at the emergency address, your child will be taken to the appropriate Safeguarding Children's Team. The transport phone number and the Safeguarding Children's Team number will be in the letter.

The transport will then drop your child off at one of the two addresses given and inform the local authority.

If you contact the transport company from your home address before your child is dropped off at one of the two other addresses, your child will be returned home by the transport.

If there are ongoing instances where you are not available, the case will be referred to the appropriate Safeguarding Children's Team and this may result in transport help being removed or changed.

19.2 Children who go to schools inside the borough

If the transport calls at the authorised drop-off point and you are not available to meet your child, the transport will only wait longer than three minutes at the driver's discretion, and even then they will only do this if it does not interfere with the journey times for other children due to travel.

Since your child attends a school inside the borough, this school will act as first point of contact in emergency cases, assuming staff members are still present to take care of your child. If there is nobody available at the school to take care of your child, the transport will then attempt to take your child to your nominated emergency address. Lastly, if nobody is available at the emergency address, your child will be taken to the appropriate Safeguarding Children's Team.

If the transport decides to move on from the normal drop-off point, a standard letter will be left at the authorised drop-off point (normally the home address) to inform you that your child has been taken to school or your nominated emergency address. This letter explains that if nobody is available at the school or emergency address, your child will be taken to the appropriate Safeguarding Children's Team. The transport phone number and the Safeguarding Children's Team number will be in the letter. If the authorised drop-off point is a bus stop or collection point, the transport will follow the same procedure as if the drop-off point were your home address.

The transport will drop your child off at one of the three places listed above and will tell the local authority. If your child has been dropped back to school, the school will make arrangements to contact you. If you are still not available, your child will be taken firstly to your nominated emergency address and, if your emergency contact is not available there, onto the Safeguarding Children's Team.

If you contact the transport company before your child is returned to school, taken to your nominated emergency address or taken to the appropriate Safeguarding Children's Team, your child will be returned to their normal drop-off point (although the timing of this drop-off may be at considerably later time than normal, and after all other children on board have been taken to their drop-off points).

Both these procedures are intended for emergency use only; parents should not rely on this facility as a source of childcare. If the facility is seen to be being misused, the child's transport provision will be reviewed and monitored.

20 Extra journeys (including part-time attendance)

Transport providers are only allowed to make agreed journeys from home to school and from school to home (where the home address is that agreed on the statement or EHCP, or authorised by the local authority).

Prior to the start of transport, the local authority will tell you what is covered under any transport arrangement (for example, transport home every day or once a week). If you would like to request a change to these arrangements, you must write to us. Help with transport does not cover school trips, journeys to sports facilities, work experience or work placements, apprenticeships or traineeships, medical appointments, visits to other schools or locations (including school trips), collection from school due to illness, parental attendance at meetings, travel to or from extended hours school clubs or exams. The local authority will not make any payments to transport providers for these journeys. They must be invoiced directly to the school or parent, depending on who arranged the journey. Where pupils have more than one address, home to school transport will be provided to and from the residence where the pupil is habitually and normally resident.

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

21 Respite and foster care placements

While providing transport to and from respite and foster care is not a statutory duty, the Council and AfC recognise that respite care provides valuable and necessary support to parents and carers. In some circumstances, we may be able to offer transport to respite care services to support carers in maintaining their role, so applications for transport from a respite care placement to the pupil's school will therefore be considered. It is ultimately the responsibility of the parents or carers to notify the SEND Transport Service of the dates of respite at least 10 days in advance to allow sufficient time to plan the transport, although we will assist where possible in exceptional circumstances.

Please contact us in these cases. Transport will ordinarily take between six and 12 working days to arrange, and in some special cases may take longer (for example, where there is a need for a specialist vehicle).

It should be noted that, where the local authority agrees to support transport to or from respite facilities, this transport is in place of the relevant journey to or from the home address for that school day.

Availability of transport is not guaranteed and all cases will be considered on an individual basis.

22 Re-housed children

If a family has moved to an address within a different local authority area, the responsibility for the child's SEND statement or EHCP and their home to school transport transfers to the local authority they now live in. 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.

23 Extended schooling (breakfast and after-school clubs or activities)

The local authority will not normally provide transport for pupils to access extended schooling. In these cases, parents will need to make their own arrangements to get their children to and from any activity that is outside the school's normal hours.

In some cases, schools are able to arrange transport and parents may wish to make use of these services. However, it should be noted that schools are able to charge parents directly for this service at cost.

The local authority will only consider providing transport assistance for extended schooling if it is at no extra cost to the local authority.

24 Changing school or moving from a specialist class to a mainstream class

If your child already accesses SEND home to school transport assistance and then changes school, or moves from a specialist class to take up a mainstream place at the same school, we will reassess their transport needs and eligibility against the LA SEND Transport policy. This may mean that transport which has been available is no longer provided. Please consider this when deciding on schools.

The above also needs to be considered when applying for siblings school places in primary or secondary schools; if transport arrangements change for the child with SEND, and transport which has been available to them is no longer provided, this may impact on transport arrangements for other children in the same family.

25 Dual and link placements, inclusion and pupil referral units

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

AfC has the discretion to arrange transport for integration purposes.

The Council and AfC expect all pupils attending pupil referral units to travel between home and the unit by public bus transport if they have not made alternative arrangements. All public bus transport for children aged 18 and under is provided by Transport for London free of charge with the use of the correct Oyster photo-card – www.tfl.gov.uk

26 Residential schools and parent visits

For pupils who are eligible for transport help to and from boarding schools, the following applies.

- If your child is attending a weekly-boarding placement funded by the local authority, we will provide transport help at the start and end of the school week.
- If your child is attending a termly-boarding placement (38 to 40 week academic year) funded by the local authority, we will generally provide help at the start and end of each half-term period. Depending on the placement, this generally totals 12 journeys a year.
- Transport assistance for any pupils attending termly boarding school placements will not exceed the 12 one way journeys. If the school is closed on a weekly or fortnightly basis, this must be reflected in the fees being paid by the local authority for the school placement and, accordingly, transport will be provided to coincide with school closure.
- If your child is attending a 52-week residential school placement funded by the local authority, transport will be agreed on an individual basis.
- Some schools have school buses that pick up from regional bus stops. We may provide help to and from those bus stops for pupils to make their onward journeys.
- We will not provide help with transport for parents or families to visit the school. If you want to visit (including the first day of school), you must make your own arrangements or contact the school.
- In exceptional cases, where the child attends an out-borough placement, parents or carers may be provided with transport assistance to school a maximum of once a year to attend their child's annual review. However, these criteria do not apply in cases where pupils are attending a school which was initially chosen by means of parental preference (see section 5 for more information).

27 Pupil behaviour standards

Any pupil may experience behavioural difficulties as a result of their SEND; AfC will work with schools, parents, carers and transport operators to manage instances where the pupil exhibits extreme behaviour characteristics.

Every child on SEND transport is different, so there is no over-arching training available to offer to passenger assistants in terms of managing children's needs on transport. Where we do experience difficulties with behaviour on a route, depending on the needs of the child, AfC works closely with the parents and the school which the child attends, to discuss options and ensure that the passenger assistant can observe how school staff would manage a similar situation, and liaises with the school about the child completing some targeted learning (perhaps using social stories to help them manage difficulties which they are experiencing etc). This means that the training received will be tailored around the needs of the child.

However, it is recognised that poor behaviour may affect the concentration of the driver, or the overall safety of the other pupils or any passenger assistant (if one is allocated to that run), and in some cases, alternative arrangements will need to be made.

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

Parents will be responsible for transporting their own children during any period of exclusion from transport.

Pupils who display unacceptable behaviour when travelling with other pupils between home and school, will not receive a taxi of their own as a result of this behaviour.

The procedure for issuing warning and/or exclusions is set out within the SEND Home to School Transport Policy.

When using home to school transport, pupils must:

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

Pupils must not:

- abscond from the vehicle;
- speak in an offensive or abusive manner to the crew, other passengers or any other member of the public whilst in or around the vehicle;
- behave in a way that 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; or

- spit or fight.

28 Short-term changes to transport

28.1 Pupils

Pupils who do not normally receive transport assistance

Pupils who have short-term difficulties (for example, a broken leg or other short-term illness) may be eligible for transport assistance to and from school.

Pupils who receive bus transport provision

Where a child receives home to school transport from a private bus company and cannot get to and from a collection point (for example, due to a broken leg or other short-term illness) temporary assistance may be offered as replacement for this service, as temporary physical or medical constraints make it difficult for this child to access the service.

Pupils with a temporarily change of address

Transport assistance may not be provided where a child who usually receives assistance moves to a different address in the short-term (for example, due to family circumstances), if the changed address results in additional transport costs. The parent will be expected to pay any additional costs associated with the short-term move, or make their own transport arrangements.

The local authority will only consider transport assistance for pupils with short-term difficulties after a period of two weeks.

28.2 Parents

Parents with a disability or illness

Where a parent with a disability or illness has difficulty in getting their child to and from school, additional support may be provided by Adults Social Care Services within the local authorities. For Kingston, the Adults Social Care team can be contacted on 020 8547 5005, and for Richmond, the Adults Social Care team can be contacted on 020 8891 7971.

Parents with authorised mileage allowances

Temporary assistance (for example, taxi) 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 (for example, due to a broken leg). Please note that transport arrangements can take five days to arrange (and where there is a need for a specialist vehicle, this may make take longer).

Parents who are unable to take their child to a collection point

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

29 Comments, questions and complaints

We are constantly looking at ways to improve our service and we welcome any comments from parents, children and school staff on any issues relating to the transport service we offer which can help us to develop the provision we offer.

If you have any complaints, please contact the Transport Officer in the first instance.

30 Contacts

For pupils who have places in taxis (Kingston and Richmond pupils)

In the first instance, parents should contact the appropriate transport controller (we will give you details in the start-up letter we send to you). If you need more advice, please the box below.

For pupils who travel on a Kingston Depot school minibus

3 Cocks Crescent
New Malden, Surrey
KT3 4AH

T: 07704 300 394
E: caroline.lowe@achievingforchildren.org.uk

For pupils who travel on a Richmond Depot school minibus

Langhorn Drive
Twickenham
TW2 7SG

T: 020 8487 5186
E: rachel.freeman@achievingforchildren.org.uk

If the transport controller at your child's transport company cannot resolve your query, please contact the relevant SEND Transport Officer within our transport department.

SEND Transport
Achieving for Children
Guildhall 2
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 1EU

For Kingston pupils, please contact Kingston SEND Transport Officers on:

T: 020 8547 5540
E: sen_transport@achievingforchildren.org.uk

For Richmond pupils, please contact Richmond SEND Transport Officers on:

T: 020 8547 4708
E: sen_transport@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Nearest Place of Safety Addresses

For pupils living in Kingston, their designated nearest place of safety will be:

Referral & Assessment Team
Guildhall 2, High Street
Kingston
KT1 1EU.

T: 020 8547 6363

For pupils living in Kingston, their designated nearest place of safety will be:

Referral & Assessment Team
42 York Street
Twickenham
TW1 3BW

T: 020 8891 7669

