

# **PROPOSED Home to school travel assistance policy for children and young people**

Academic year

2020-2021

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## 1. Introduction

This policy outlines the support and assistance available for children and young people travelling between home and school/college.

Most children and young people will access school/college without additional assistance from the Council. Where assistance is given, it should be part of a plan that encourages children and young people to become more independent and resilient in their future lives.

The Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to make such suitable and free travel arrangements for 'eligible children' as they consider necessary to facilitate attendance at school and this duty underpins the policy.

The policy has been written in conjunction with:

- The Education Act 1996
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 0-25 years Code of Practice 2014
- Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014
- Post 16 Transport to Education and Training 2019

In this policy, the term 'parent/guardian' includes all those with parental responsibilities.

## 2. Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following general principles:

- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school
- Communities will be encouraged to work together and support each other, and parents/guardians will be encouraged to work with relatives, friends, parents at the same school as their children, neighbours, childminders and others to support them with transporting their children to school where possible and appropriate
- The use of free travel on public transport will be encouraged wherever possible
- Students who are able to travel independently will be encouraged to do so
- Students will be generally expected to be accompanied by a parent/guardian where necessary, unless there is a good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent/guardian to do so
- Students who have additional travel needs will be offered the most independent and personally enabling solution for their situation
- All travel options will be explored for students and any assistance offered will look at what is efficient and effective, both in terms of sustainability and cost – where travel assistance is provided, the most cost-effective mode of transport that meets the individual's needs will always be used
- The travel needs of students will be reviewed regularly to ensure the arrangements are still appropriate for their assessed needs

- Flexibility in the use of Council provision to enable students to get to school will be encouraged, including arranging a mixture of support from families and the Council

### **3. Eligibility criteria and types of assistance provided**

The eligibility criteria sets out who is eligible for support from the Council. The criteria should be read in conjunction with the Council's principles for offering travel assistance.

The eligibility criteria and the type of travel assistance that may be offered differs depending on the age of the student.

#### **Students aged 0-5**

Students aged under 5 are generally expected to be accompanied by parents/guardians in order to attend their place of education. Each application made in this category will be considered on its own individual circumstances to assess the need for support to facilitate attendance at their place of education.

#### **Students aged 5-16**

##### Eligibility criteria

As part of the Transport for London service, all students aged 5-16 can travel free and at a discounted fare on public transport, up until they finish education.

For support above and beyond what is available for free from Transport for London, the Council may provide further travel assistance.

Students aged between 5-16 may be eligible for travel assistance due to the following:

1. The impact of the student's special educational needs and disabilities on their ability to travel safely independently or with supervision
2. If the student has temporary medical or mobility needs which mean they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, and there is relevant supporting medical evidence (see appendix for details point 1.4)
3. If the student has long-term medical or mobility needs which mean they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, and there is relevant supporting medical evidence (see appendix for details point 1.4)
4. If the distance between the school and the home exceeds the statutory walking distance for a student that age and no suitable arrangement can be made for a school closer to home (see appendix for details point 1.5)
5. If the family is on low income and the distance between the school and the home exceeds the statutory walking distances (see appendix for details point 1.5)
6. The assessed safety and nature of the route between the school and the home and the alternative routes available (see appendix for details point 1.6)

7. Parent/guardian medical or mobility needs which mean they cannot reasonably be expected to transport the student to school, when the student cannot transport themselves, with relevant supporting medical evidence (see appendix for details point 1.4)

### Types of assistance for 5-16 year olds

As part of the Transport for London service, students can travel free and at a discounted fare on buses and trains, up until they finish education.

For support above and beyond what is available from Transport for London, there are different types of travel assistance that may firstly be offered to those aged 5-16 who need support, depending on their needs, including:

- A free space on the travel training programme to build confidence travelling and gain the skills required to do so independently, or with support (see appendix for details point 1.1)
- Reimbursement of fuel (£0.44 per mile) for an identified person to perform a maximum of four journeys per day (see appendix for details point 1.2)

In exceptional circumstances, students may be offered:

- A Freedom Pass to enable free travel on all public transport, including trains
- A seat on a bus with pick up at a designated meeting point (see appendix for details point 1.3)
- A seat on a bus with pick up outside of the dwelling
- A taxi

There may be circumstances where a combination of the above support is offered.

### **Students aged 16-18, or those aged 19-25 who started their course before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday**

#### Eligibility criteria

Students aged over the age of 16 are generally expected to access what is offered by Transport for London in order to attend their place of education or training.

The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide travel assistance to students with special educational needs and disabilities aged over 16 free of charge, however Havering Council does offer free support to those over the age of 16 if they are assessed as needing it in order to attend their place of education. This form of assistance is only offered to students with special educational needs and disabilities who are assessed as needing it.

Students aged between 16-18, or students who started their education/training prior to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, will be assessed on the following to determine whether they are eligible for support above and beyond what is offered by Transport for London:

- The impact the student's special educational needs and disabilities has on their ability to travel safely to school, independently or with supervision
- Whether the student attends one of the eligible provisions (see appendix for details point )

- Whether the student could access their place of education or training if no arrangements were made
- Whether the student can reach their place of education or training without incurring such stress, strain, or difficulty that would prevent them from benefiting from the education, and this can include travel journeys which would exceed 75 minutes
- The impact the distance and route travelled has on their ability to access their place of education
- Whether the student is eligible to access a 16-19 years bursary fund on the grounds of transport and whether this will suitably meet the needs of the student – if a student is not accessing this when they are eligible, the Council will require students to apply for this form of travel assistance in the first instance – if the student is already accessing one or more of these funds then exceptional circumstances will need to be demonstrated to determine the need for additional assistance from the Council
- Whether the student can access any other forms of support available to them, including a bursary fund or another form of school/college transportation and whether this can meet their needs
- Whether the student can be accompanied, and whether it is reasonable to expect a parent/guardian to accompany the student

Types of support for 16-18 year olds, or those aged 19-25 who started their course before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday

For support above and beyond what is available from Transport for London, there are different types of travel assistance that may firstly be offered to those aged 16-18, or over 19 if they started their course before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, who need support, depending on their needs, including:

- Support and signposting to access a relevant bursary fund to meet travel needs
- Support and signposting to access other relevant forms of support available, including another form of school/college transportation
- A free space on the travel training programme to build confidence travelling and gain the skills required to do so independently, or with support
- Fuel reimbursement for an identified person to transport the student to their place of education or training

In exceptional circumstances, students may be offered:

- A Freedom Pass to enable free travel on all public transport, including trains
- A seat on a bus with pick up at a designated meeting point (see appendix for details point 1.3)
- A seat on a bus with pick up outside of the dwelling
- A taxi

## **Students aged 19-25 who started their course after their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday**

Students aged over the age of 19 are generally expected to access what is offered by Transport for London in order to attend their place of education or training. For support above and beyond what is available from Transport for London, travel assistance may be offered for students aged 19-25 who started their course after their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Each application made in this category will be considered on its own individual circumstances to assess the need for support to facilitate attendance at their place of education/training.

## **Discretionary**

The Council has discretion to grant travel assistance even though it falls outside of the normal policy, and will do so in exceptional circumstances. Reasons for such decisions will be recorded and reviewed as required.

## **4. Exclusions**

There are circumstances where the Council **will not** provide travel assistance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- If a school needs to send a student home for any reason, parents/guardians are responsible for making their own arrangements for this
- If the school placement was made on parental/guardian preference and there is a suitable school nearer to the home address – parents/guardians are responsible for making their own arrangements to these places of education
- If the student has applied for and receives another form of travel assistance, such as a travel card or Freedom Pass on the grounds of their age or disability – it is expected that this would also be used for travelling to and from school and exceptional reasons will need to be demonstrated to justify any additional assistance
- The policy applies to travel assistance between home and school/college and vice versa and does not relate to travel assistance between educational institutions or other places during or after the school day, which includes before/after school clubs
- The Council's general expectation is that a student will be accompanied by a parent/guardian where necessary, unless there is a good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent to do so. The Council may take individual family work commitments, childcare arrangements, caring responsibilities and/or inconveniences to a parent/guardian into account, but only if there is a good reason to do so and appropriate evidence can be provided. It is unlikely that travel assistance or a certain mode of travel assistance will solely be offered due to these reasons. If your work commitments or childcare arrangements conflict with your child's travel to and from school, parents/guardians are advised to:
  - Seek support from the community
  - Look for breakfast or after school clubs so drop-off/pick-up times fit in with working hours
  - Use alternative care options available, such as a child minder or au pair



- Take up the statutory right to flexible working hours (more information can be found at [www.gov.uk/flexible-working](http://www.gov.uk/flexible-working))

## **5. Length of time of assistance**

Where travel assistance is provided, this will be given for the length of time stated in the confirmation notice and will be given no longer than one academic year.

The Council has the right to withdraw assistance or change the type of assistance required during this period if needs and circumstances are found to have changed.

## **6. Reviews of assistance provided**

Where travel assistance is provided, the type of assistance accessed will be reviewed continuously.

For students with an education, health and care plan, a review of travel arrangements will be undertaken in line with the annual reviews of the plan.

Changes identified in a student's needs or circumstances may lead to changes in the type of assistance provided or the discontinuing of assistance during the academic year.

## **7. Changes to circumstances**

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to report any changes in circumstances during the academic year that may impact on their eligibility for continued travel assistance. Changes reported will lead to a reassessment of the student's application in light of the changes, which may lead to the mode of travel assistance changing or the withdrawal of support.

Changes can include, but are not limited to:

- Student's needs and ability to travel independently or with supervision
- Changes in the student's home address
- Changes in the school/college attended

## **8. Investigations of fraudulent information**

If any support provided pursuant to this policy is based on information provided to the Council by the applicant which is suspected to be false or misleading, the Council reserves the right to investigate further, which may lead to travel assistance being discontinued. If, after investigation, the Council concludes that there is sufficient evidence to base a charge of fraud it reserves the right to refer the matter to the police or to take its own criminal or civil action.



## **9. Assistance in future years**

Travel assistance will be provided for the stated time and will be given no longer than one academic year. Travel assistance provided for one academic year will not be a guarantee of assistance being provided in future years, and applications will be reviewed on their own merits against the academic years' policy each year.

## **10. How to apply for travel assistance**

### **Free/discounted travel on public transport**

To apply for free or discounted travel, visit: [www.tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel)

### **Bursary funds**

To apply for 16-19 years bursary fund, you'll need to contact your school, college or training provider. Further information can be found at: [www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/how-to-claim](http://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/how-to-claim)

### **Motability vehicles**

If you are receiving the enhanced rate of the mobility component of a personal independence payment (PIP) or the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance (DLA), you may be able to apply for a mobility vehicle under the Motability Scheme at: [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)

### **Additional travel assistance**

To apply for additional travel assistance, visit: [www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance](http://www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance)

## **11. How your application will be assessed**

Following your application, an assessment may be undertaken by the Council. This can take place via the telephone and/or face to face. Typically, face-to-face assessments are to be undertaken in the family home.

Applications will take into account the following before providing travel assistance and during the assessment of what mode of travel assistance is appropriate to offer:

1. The student's need for travel assistance above and beyond what is provided free by Transport for London
2. Whether it is reasonable to expect the student to travel the route on public transport, independently or accompanied by a parent/guardian – this will take into account a range of factors, such as the student's needs, the length of the journey and complexity of the journey
3. Whether the student can be accompanied on their travel to school and whether the parent/guardian can reasonably be expected to accompany the student – this will take into account a range of factors, such as the age of the student and whether one would ordinarily expect a student of that age to be accompanied

4. The benefit of the student receiving travel training, and any past travel training assessments/recommendations
5. The most efficient use of the Council's resources and public money
6. The student's alternative travel options available and the ability to access these safely
7. The access to a vehicle and ability to drive by a parent/guardian
8. The local and community support available to parents/guardians, including friends and relatives, and access to breakfast and after school clubs, and whether these have been exhausted first
9. The possession of a blue badge for the student or parent/guardian
10. The access to and use of a Motability vehicle which has been provided for the benefit of the student (see appendix for details point X)
11. Whether the student has a free or discounted travel card from Transport for London
12. Whether the student has a Freedom Pass on the grounds of their disability
13. The view of an education, health and care plan, if the student has one
14. The view of other professionals where appropriate, including from the student's case worker, school, college, health professional etc.
15. Whether the school placement was made on parental/guardian preference and there is another suitable qualifying school (see appendix for details point 1.7) located closer or via a safer route to the home address

Where decisions are referred to a panel, at the time of publishing this policy, this will comprise of the following members:

1. Team manager from the children and adults with disabilities team
2. Travel assistance representative/officer
3. Passenger transport representative
4. Education/admissions representative
5. Quality assurance/commissioning representative

## **12. Appeals**

### **Stage 1: Request a review of the decision**

If, after an application, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the application, you can request a review of the application to the Council.

The request for a review must be made online at [www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance](http://www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance) within 20 working days of the original notification of a decision. The request must include the reasons for the review and any additional information that is felt not to have been considered when the decision was made.

Parents/guardians also have the opportunity to provide verbal information in support of the request for a review of the decision via a telephone call. A request for a follow up telephone call can be made when the online request for review is submitted.

The decision will then be reviewed by the Council. The outcome of the review will be communicated within 20 working days from the date of receipt.

Requests for review made outside of the 20 day window will only be considered at the Council's discretion in exceptional circumstances.

The email response provided to parents/guardians aims to set out:

- The nature of the decision reached
- How the review was conducted
- What factors were considered
- Information about other departments and/or agencies consulted
- The rationale for the decision

## **Stage 2: Make an appeal**

If, after the review of the decision has been completed, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, you can make an appeal against the decision to the Council.

The appeal must be made online at [www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance](http://www.havering.gov.uk/schooltravelassistance) within 20 working days of the notification of the outcome of the review. The appeal must include the reasons the decision is being appealed and any additional information that is felt not to have been considered when the decision was made.

Parents/guardians also have the opportunity to make written or verbal representations in support of their appeal to be considered by the appeal panel. A request to make verbal representations can be requested when the online appeal is submitted.

The appeal will be considered by an independent panel within the Council. In other words none of the members will have had any previous dealings with the matter although they can be employed by the Council.

The independent appeal panel, at the time of publishing this policy, comprises of the following members:

1. Assistant Director for Education Services
2. Head of Children and Adults with Disabilities Team
3. Head of Education Provision and Inclusion

The panel will consider the appeal against the policy within 40 days of receipt. The outcome of the appeal will be made in writing within 5 working days of the decision being made.

Appeals made outside of the 20 day window will only be considered at the Council's discretion in exceptional circumstances.

The email response provided to parents/guardians following an appeal aims to set out:

- The nature of the decision reached

- How the review was conducted
- What factors were considered
- Information about other departments and/or agencies consulted
- The rationale for the decision

### **13. Complaints**

#### **Make a complaint to the Council**

An appeal must be made to the Council before making a complaint. The appeals procedure will ensure that the merits of every travel assistance application is fully considered and that it takes into account relevant circumstances.

However, if you believe the procedure or policy has not been followed as expected, you can make a complaint to the Council under the corporate complaints procedure.

**By making a complaint this will not lead to the decision being reviewed.** However it will consider whether the correct process and policy was applied. Following this, a recommendation may be made that the decision is re-reviewed.

You can make a complaint to the Council:

Online at: [www.havering.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.havering.gov.uk/complaints)

By phone to: 01708 431801

#### **Make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman**

If you are not satisfied with how your application and any review/appeal has been dealt with, you can request that the Local Government Ombudsman investigates the situation. The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent body which investigates complaints against local authorities.

You can request an investigation from the Local Government Ombudsman:

Online at: [www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-form](http://www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-form)

By phone: 0300 061 0614

## **Appendix: Definitions and further information**

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## 1.1 Travel training programme

The Council's travel training programme helps young people with disabilities, special educational needs or additional needs of secondary school age to develop road and personal safety skills so they can make the journey to their place of education independently.

The travel training programme can support with any mode of transport; including bus, train, tube, walking or a combination of different types of transport.

The programme is designed to create long-term positive effects which can support young people through their transition into adulthood and in the future when travelling, which can include improved:

- social interaction skills
- life skills
- self-esteem
- management of fears and anxieties
- responsibility
- road safety awareness
- time management
- coping strategies
- communication skills

If a student is referred to the travel training programme by the Council, the service will meet with the student and their family to develop a personalised travel plan which takes the student's needs into account.

The student will then have their own Travel Trainer allocated to them who will accompany them on their journey and support them to develop the skills and coping strategies they need.

In order to identify those suitable for personalised travel training, the Council may arrange mobility assessments at the following stages:

- On receipt of any new applications for assistance in getting to school or college
- At the end of key stages 1 and 2 and at key stage 3 (approximately age 14), if already receiving Council assistance in getting to school
- Annually for those in further education establishments and already receiving Council assistance in getting to college

The Council's aim is to give increased freedom and quality of life to Havering's children and young people. It is also an enabling process for future employment and successful travel training has been demonstrated to increase self-confidence dramatically.

## 1.2 Reimbursement of fuel

In the instance where a parent/guardian, or an identified person, has consented to use their vehicle to transport a student and fuel reimbursement is provided, the following allowances will be provided:

Journey	Amount per mile
Journey to school from home	£0.44
Journey from school to home	£0.44

A maximum of 4 journeys per day can be applied for.

Fuel reimbursement will be paid even when the student has to leave school early for any reason, however will only be paid for the miles calculated from home to school and vice versa.

## 1.3 Designated meeting point

Where travel assistance is given in the form of a seat on a bus with pick up from a designated meeting point, parents/guardians **must** make the following commitments to ensure the smooth-running of any arrangements:

- Provide up-to-date contact details to the Council so we can advise parents/guardians of any delays or problems
- Ensure that the student is ready to be picked up at the arranged time and place
- Ensure that the parent/guardian is waiting to collect the student at the arranged time and place at the end of the school day
- Ensure that the parent/guardian telephones PTS as soon as possible if the student is not attending school for any reason

## 1.4 Relevant supporting evidence

The following relevant medical supporting evidence will be accepted for parents/guardians or for students:

- Copies of any medical letters or reports that you already have, dated within the last two years regarding the person's condition. Your documents must confirm that the person has a permanent or temporary substantial impairment which causes inability to walk or considerable difficulty walking. If you no longer have copies of medical letters or reports, the GP practice reception can provide a duplicate or a patient summary of the person in questions' medical conditions and medications.
- Copies of medical history documents no more than two years old
- Social services assessment/correspondence
- DWP entitlement letter (dated within the last 12 months) showing High Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance



- All pages of DWP entitlement letter (dated within last 12 months) showing you are in receipt of 8 points or more under the 'moving around' activity of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment
- War Pensions Mobility Supplement letter (dated within the last 12 months)
- Armed Forces Compensation letter 1-8 tariff (dated within the last 12 months)
- Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI or a BD8 form) where applicants are severely sight impaired

The following will **not** be accepted:

- Copy prescriptions
- Appointment cards/letters
- Copies of medical history documents more than two years old
- Personal statements
- X-ray copies

Please note, your GP should not be asked for specific information for your mobility and an appointment should not be made solely for the purpose of obtaining letters/reports for your application, but you should provide existing documentation in line with your routine medical appointments.

If you are applying under discretionary circumstances, or if you are applying for a certain mode of travel assistance due to your work commitments, the Council may request evidence of your working hours and the employer's flexible working policy.

Failure to submit such evidence as requested or under any of these categories, or failure to submit evidence which does not support the case, will lead to travel assistance not being provided.

### **1.5 Distance**

Travel assistance may be awarded on the distance between the student's home address and the place of education. This applies to children of compulsory school age if their nearest suitable qualifying school is:

- beyond 2 miles walking distance (if below the age of 8); or
- beyond 3 miles walking distance (if aged between 8 and 16)

If the parents/guardians are in receipt of Maximum Working Tax Credit or if the student receives free school meals after year 2 if in a government funded school, and if the distance between the school and the home is:

- The nearest suitable qualifying school is beyond 2 miles (if aged over 8 and under 11)
- The nearest suitable qualifying school is between 2 and 6 miles (if aged 11-16) and there are not three or more nearer suitable qualifying schools

- The school is between 2 and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (if aged 11-16)

The walking distance is measured from a student's home address to the school using the shortest available route along which a student, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school. Only when assessing the upper limits (up to 15 miles) for schools attended based on the grounds of religion or belief does the route only calculate roads.

Distances are calculated using an independent online route planner.

### **1.5 Safety of route**

If a student lives within the standard walking distance of the nearest suitable qualifying school, the Council may provide travel assistance where the nature of the route is such that the student cannot reasonably be expected to walk (accompanied as necessary) safely.

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

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

### **1.6 Nearest suitable qualifying school**

The educational setting attended by the student must be the nearest suitable qualifying school. This must be one of the following if the student is aged between 0-16:

- A community, foundation or voluntary school
- A community or foundation special school
- A non-maintained special school
- A pupil referral unit
- A maintained nursery school
- City Technology Colleges, City Colleges for the Technology of the Arts, including free schools and University Technical Colleges
- The school named on the student's Education, Health and Care Plan

The education setting attended by the student if they are aged over 16 must be one of the following in order to be eligible for any assistance:

- A school
- A further education institution
- A Council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education
- A 16-19 academy
- An establishment funded directly by the education and Skills Funding Agency, for example independent specialist providers for learners with special educational needs and disabilities
- A learning provider that is funded by the Council to deliver accredited programmes of learning (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers)
- Apprenticeships and traineeships

### **1.7 Motability vehicles**

The terms and conditions of leasing a vehicle through the Motability Scheme include that the care must be used by, or for the benefit of, the disabled person. This does not mean that the disabled person needs to be in the car for every journey.

In practice, this means other named drivers in the household can use the car for shopping and other routine activities, as long as the disabled person is benefiting from the use of the vehicle and is not being denied access of the vehicle if they need it during this time.

If the Council becomes aware of misuse of a Motability vehicle, including if the vehicle is not being used for the benefit of the disabled person, the Council reserves the right to report any concerns regarding misuse to the Motability Scheme to investigate.

### **1.8 Place of safety**

It is recognised that circumstances outside of parent/guardian's control arise, meaning occasionally parent/guardian's cannot be at home or at the designated meeting point on time to receive their child from the passenger transport bus or taxi after school.

As part of the agreement for receiving travel assistance from the Council, parent/guardian's are asked to call the route number or the passenger transport depot to let the driver and escort know that they are delayed.

Any student who does not have an appropriate adult to receive them at home or to collect them from the designated meeting point **must be taken to a place of safety once the other students on the route have been dropped off**. This will apply except where written authorisation has been received from the parent/guardian confirming that the student may be left unaccompanied at home or at the meeting point.

Students taken to the place of safety will be looked after until the parent/guardian is able to collect them. If the drivers and escorts are able to make contact with a parent/carer whilst en-route, the student can be returned home at the end of the journey.

The place of safety for students is:

St Kilda Children's Centre (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)  
90 Eastern Road  
Romford  
RM1 3QA  
Tel: 01708 434799

### Procedure for using a place of safety

If a parent/guardian is not at home or at the designated meeting point at the appointed time and the passenger assistant cannot reach the parent/carer by phone, the assistant must ring the depot so that staff can continue to attempt to make contact. The route will continue.

If, at the end of the route, contact has still not been made with the parent/guardian, the driver and escort should take the student to St Kilda's Children Centre. Staff at the depot should call ahead to St Kilda's to give advance notice that a student may be arriving.

On arrival, the driver/escort must pass on full contact details and any information they have about the student's needs to St Kilda's staff. St Kilda's staff may wish to ring the Children and Adults with Disabilities team (who will be available until at least 5pm) if they require any further information about the student.

In the event that the student is visibly distressed and/or may require some form of intervention, the driver and escort should stay with the student at St Kilda's until they are collected. The student should be familiar with these staff and they will be fully equipped to manage the situation. If the student is arriving by a pre-arranged taxi, staff at the depot should give advance notice to St Kilda's to ensure suitable staffing arrangements.

St Kilda's will remain open until 7pm. If a student is not collected by their parent/guardian before 7pm, staff at St Kilda's should contact the Emergency Duty Team. Should the Emergency Duty Team not be available, staff should make arrangements for the student to be taken to an on-call foster carer or another provider if the student uses a wheelchair. St Kilda's should receive the weekly list of on call carers. Before the placement is made, staff at St Kilda's should contact the relevant Service Manager to agree the placement.

If the student is taken to an emergency carer then St Kilda's will leave a message for the parent/guardian to contact the Emergency Duty Team, and alert the Emergency Duty Team that the placement has been used and where the student is placed.

If a parent/guardian does not have the means to collect their student from St Kilda's Children's Centre, a Head of Service will need to agree appropriate support and funding to ensure the safe return of the student.

### **1.9 Passenger assistant criteria**

Every passenger transport bus will have a minimum of one driver and one passenger assistant present.

There may be circumstances when a student needs additional support on the bus, or when receiving other forms of travel assistance, such as a taxi.

The criteria for determining whether a student is eligible for a passenger assistant is:

1. Depending on the social, mental and physical needs of the student and how best those needs can be met. The views of other professionals, practitioners, colleagues in Passenger Transport, the panel and parents/guardians will be taken into account. The types of support provided by a passenger assistant will also be taken into account during the assessment.
2. Age. Any student eligible for travel assistance aged under 8 will have a passenger assistant if they are travelling in a taxi. This role can be provided by the parent or through a Council-arranged assistant.

For students who have a passenger assistant, an assessment of risks is undertaken in line with the general risk assessments available for all students receiving travel assistance. An individual risk assessment is only completed when a student's needs are not covered by the general risk assessment, or if there is any other need to complete an individual risk assessment.

The final decision over eligibility for a passenger is made by the Assessment Officer.

Support provided by a passenger assistant can include, but is not limited to:

- Actively working to diffuse difficult situations
- Looking after students from the moment they are brought to the bus or taxi by the parent/guardian to when they are handed over to the school
- Administering an epi-pen, if required
- Contributing towards monitoring behaviour and developing personalised solutions
- Contributing towards reviewing the arrangements to ensure they continue to best meet needs

A passenger assistant **does not** administer any medication.