

**Travel Assistance Policy
for Children and Young People with
Special Educational Needs and
Disabilities (SEND) attending
Nurseries, Schools, Sixth Forms
and FE Colleges**

2021/22

May 2021

Part C

Travel support to access education for young people aged 16-25 years.

1. Introduction

Part C applies to young people who are resident within Bolton and who are above the compulsory school age (aged over 16 but under 25). It specifically relates to young people with SEND and an EHCP who are unable to travel to and from education and/or training independently at the start and end of the school and college day.

The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to ensure that there is no gap in support while an individual makes the transition from children to adult services on or after their 18th birthday. Children services must be maintained until a decision on adult provision is agreed.

2. Legislation and Responsibilities

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty under Section 509AA of the Education Act 1996 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.

2.1. Parent/Carer and Young People's Responsibilities

A young person must stay in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday if they were born on or after 1 September 1997.

Options are:

- full-time education - e.g. at a school or college
- an apprenticeship or traineeship
- part-time education or training - as well as being employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week

Please note the Raising of the Participation Age has not created any new entitlement to free or subsidised post 16 travel assistance – students are not required just to stay on at school or college but can work, volunteer or take part in an apprenticeship whilst continuing their education.

There is an expectation that parents/carers will actively promote and support their young person to access and attend education and training.

2.2. Council Responsibilities

Section 509AB(1) of the Education Act 1996 imposes a requirement that the Council should set out the extent to which the arrangements specified 509AA can facilitate the attendance at schools and colleges of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The 16-18 transport duty relates to young people of sixth form age with learning difficulties and/or 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).

3. Eligibility Criteria

16 – 19 Travel Assistance

The criteria that the Council will consider to make a decision on whether the provision of transport is necessary for a young person aged 16 to 19 is as follows:

- Attending nearest provision
- Travelling more than 3 miles to attend nearest provision
- Unable to access public transport
- EHCP in place
- Special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems

Travel Support may be provided for young people aged over 16 with an EHCP who are registered as attending a full time school or college course **and**:

- Attend a designated/qualifying school or college outlined by the Council as the nearest appropriate establishment that meets the needs of the young person **and**
- A young person attends a school or college more than 3 miles from their home address.

Where the distance to be travelled is less than 3 miles, travel support will be considered, taking into account the individual circumstances and the travel needs of the young person with SEND that prevents them from accessing education or training independently.

Whilst a young person has the right to express a preference for which school or college course they wish to attend, a young person who attends a school/college which is further away than the nearest suitable qualifying school/college will not be eligible for travel support even if the distance from home to the school/college they attend is more than the qualifying walking distance

In addition to those circumstances outlined above, there are some additional, exceptional circumstances in which travel support to access education may be given.

Specific consideration **will be** given to:

- A young person attending their nearest school/college who has a temporary disability or illness which prevents them from accessing public transport
- A young person with parents/carers who have medical needs or learning difficulties who are unable to support the young person with travel arrangements.

4. Travel Support Requirements

Travel support may be considered using supporting written evidence, (within the last 12 months), from a range of sources, for example, Education or health professionals, parents and other relevant professionals, that describes the young person as having:

- Long term severely restricted independent mobility, due to a physical disability
- Long term severely restricted independent mobility due to a medical condition resulting in severe persistent pain and/or extreme fatigue
- A sensory impairment resulting in severely restricted mobility

This is not an exhaustive list and requests will be considered on a case by case basis. **Note:** “Long term” describes something that is likely to last for at least a year and in many cases for the rest of the life of the person affected.

It is important to bear in mind that the decision to provide travel support to access education is based on the young person’s needs. When determining whether to offer travel support those factors to which consideration will not normally be given are listed

as in Section 4 (page 5 and 6). Please refer to Section 4 for the full list of Eligibility Criteria and exceptional circumstances.

4.1. Types of travel solutions provided

Travel pass - This is a free pass for use on public transport. This may also be provided for a parent/carer or another travel buddy (e.g. Relative, Sibling or peer) to support the young person to access education.

Personal Travel Budget (PTB) – Support for meeting the costs associated with ensuring support to access education may be provided through a Personal Travel Budget. This includes a variety of flexible support options such as: access to funds for parent/carers to enable them to drop earlier and collect later, paying for a family member, mileage and use of a befriending service. Family based travel solutions could also be supported by a Personal Travel Budget. (Parent/carers can specify a preference for a PTB in their application for travel support assistance)

Supported public transport - It may be possible for a young person to travel on public transport if they have some assistance. Where parents/carers are unable to accompany their son/daughter, the Council may provide a Passenger Assistant or a travel buddy.

Travel Vehicles

In exceptional circumstances the Council may provide a vehicle to transport a child and young person to and from school/college. Vehicles and drivers are provided by a suitably qualified, registered, commercial provider working to contractual standards set by the Council. All drivers will all have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate. This could include:

- **Multiple pick up Vehicles** - Whenever possible, young people will travel together in mini-buses. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those young people travelling on them. Each route will be planned on the basis of school start and finish times and the shortest possible route for all young people travelling on a particular vehicle. A multiple pick up vehicle may include a Passenger Assistant to support passengers from point of handover to drop off destination. The Passenger Assistant is responsible for the safe handover over to a responsible adult. Passenger Assistants will all have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate. Young people may be picked up and dropped off at a convenient location, within a reasonable distance from their home, in many cases from recognised bus stops. A home pick up and drop off will only be made where it is deemed essential due to the young person's special educational needs/disabilities. In exceptional circumstances, where there are surplus places on a multi pick-up vehicle, it may be possible for parent/carers to purchase a seat for a young person with SEND who has not met the eligibility criteria. The cost will not be in excess of the cost of an annual travel pass. This would be subject to availability and/or change, as needs for eligible passengers take priority. A notice period, where possible, would be given, if the surplus place is no longer available.
- **Taxis and private hire vehicles** - Under very exceptional circumstances, the Council may support young people to access education or training in separate taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the young person. A Passenger Assistant will not always be necessary. Where a Passenger Assistant is not deployed, a passenger must travel in the rear of the vehicle. There is an expectation parent/carers will support the young person into the rear of the vehicle.

Parents/carers can sometimes act as a Passenger Assistant for their young person in a taxi or a private hire vehicle in certain circumstances (e.g. where medical support may be necessary on the journey to school).

5. Placement in a Residential Special College

In the case of a young person with an Education Health and Care Plan who attends their nearest appropriate residential college and that college is **named in the EHCP**, parents/guardians are eligible to claim for the reimbursement of travelling expenses incurred whilst escorting their young person to and from the college. Claims may be made for the return journeys at the beginning and the end of each school term. In addition parents can claim for one return journey if they wish to attend the young person's Annual Review or Transition Plan Review at the school.

The rate of refund is 28p per mile for the first 50 miles of a return journey and 12p per mile for the remainder of the journey.

If the pupil concerned needs to be accompanied, but his/her parents/carers are unable to escort him/her to or from college, the Local Authority will, given the appropriate notice, arrange for an approved transport contractor. No assistance will then be granted for parental travelling costs for that period.

6. Post 19 EHCP Travel assistance –

The Council also has a duty under the Education and Skills Act 2008 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.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, the Council may continue to maintain an EHCP for young people over 19 if a young person requires additional time, in comparison to the majority of others of the same age who do not have SEN, to complete his or her education or training. Local authorities may continue to provide special educational provision until the end of the academic year in which the young person turns 25 and the council may provide transport if it is necessary for the duration of the course.

The Council does have a duty under Section 508F (3) of the Education Act to make travel arrangements where necessary where the adult is aged under 25 and is subject to special educational needs and disabilities learning difficulty assessment **and** the local authority has secured the provision of education or training at an institution outside both the further and higher education sector **and** the provision of boarding accommodation. Travel assistance will be provided free of charge for up to 15 return journeys per academic year.

Eligibility for travel assistance is considered having regard to the young person's assessed needs and why it is necessary for the council to make travel arrangements. This could be through your education, health and care needs assessment or the social care assessment.

The criteria that the Council will consider to make a decision on whether the provision of transport arrangements is necessary is as follows:

- An EHCP is in place to support a progression in the young person's education
- The student is attending the nearest appropriate educational placement or training provider and that provision is named in their EHCP and this is more than 3 miles from their home address.
- The student is unable to access public transport due to their special educational needs, disability or mobility difficulty.
- There are no current transport arrangements available

The travel support will be discussed and agreed at the same time as the funding for the

placement. There is an expectation that applications for travel support must be submitted on an annual basis; at the same time as the request to extend the education and or training provision.

7. Placement in a Residential Special College

In the case of a young person with an Education Health and Care Plan who attends their nearest appropriate residential college and that college is **named in the EHCP**, Personal Travel Budget may be made for the return journeys at the beginning and the end of each school term and one return journey if they wish to attend the young person's Annual Review or Transition Plan Review at the school.

The rate of PTA will be based on 28p per mile for the first 50 miles of a return journey and 12p per mile for the remainder of the journey

7.1. Types of travel solutions provided

The nature and mode of travel support will be determined by the Council and will be one that is consistent with the council's duty to secure value for money and the needs of the young person.

Personal Travel Budget – Support towards meeting the costs associated to access education may be provided through Personal Travel Budget. This includes a variety of flexible support options such as: access to funds for parent/carers to enable them to take and collect the young person at the beginning and the end of the term, paying for a family member, mileage and use of a befriending service. Family based travel solutions could also be supported by a PTB.

Travel Vehicles

Only in very exceptional circumstances the Council may provide a vehicle to transfer a young person to and from school/college. Vehicles and drivers are provided by a suitably qualified, registered, commercial provider working to contractual standards set by the Council. All drivers will all have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate. This could include:

- **Multiple pick up vehicles** - Whenever possible, young people will travel together in mini-buses. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those young people travelling on them. Each route will be planned on the basis of school/college start and finish times and the shortest possible route for all young people travelling on a particular vehicle. A multiple pick up vehicle may include a Passenger Assistant to support passengers from point of handover to drop off destination. The Passenger Assistant is responsible for the safe handover over to a responsible adult. Passenger Assistants will all have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate. Young people may be picked up and dropped off at a convenient location, within a reasonable distance from their home, in many cases from recognised bus stops. A home pick up and drop off will only be made where it is deemed essential due to the young person's significant needs.
In exceptional circumstances, where there are surplus places on a multi pick-up vehicle, it may be possible for parent/carers to purchase a seat for a young person with SEND who has not met eligibility criteria. This would be subject to availability and/or change, as needs for eligible passengers take priority. A notice period, where possible, would be given, if the surplus place is no longer available.
- **Taxis and private hire vehicles** - Under very exceptional circumstances, the Council may offer subsidised support for young people to access education in taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the young person. A Passenger Assistant will not be provided.

