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

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Travel Support to Access Education

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Travel Support to Access Education

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the travel support available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) living in Bolton to access education.

This policy is set out in three parts as follows:

Part A Travel support for children under compulsory school age to access pre-school provision

Part B - Travel support to access education for children and young people from compulsory school to age 16.

Part C - Travel support to access education/training for young people 16 to 25 years of age

Part D - Application, Review and Appeals processes

2. Principles

Bolton Council's policy on Travel Assistance is based on providing parents/carers with a travel solution which will be founded on the following principles.

- A commitment to ensuring that children and young people can fulfil their potential. The aim of this policy is that all children and young people with SEND should lead lives that are as independent and as free from restriction as possible
- Promoting inclusive opportunities to enable children and young people to travel to and from school or college using family based approaches similar to those used by other children and young people wherever possible, taking account of their age and needs. Bolton Council shall have regard to the wishes and feelings of the child/young person and the child's parent, including participation in decision making and the provision of information and support to enable participation in those decisions.
- Promoting sustainable, safe, healthy and appropriate travel solutions by working in partnership with parents/carers to support them with their legal responsibility to make sure their children attend school if they are of compulsory school-age.
- A commitment to equality of opportunity and the celebration of diversity and an opposition to all forms of discrimination.
- A duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children/young people with special needs are not at a substantial disadvantage (compared) to their peers.
- Efficient use of public resources, delivering better outcomes and providing better value for money.

Part A

Travel support for children to access pre-school provision 0 years - statutory school-age

This part of the policy is for children aged 0 years until compulsory school age with SEND. This policy supports children with SEND to access early years provision at the start of the session and return home (or to an alternative designated destination) at the end of the session, each week day during funded hours

There is no statutory duty for the Council to provide travel support assistance for children under compulsory school-age **however the council may do so if the circumstances merit that such travel support is provided.**

1. Eligibility for a home to setting travel solution

The Council may offer discretionary travel assistance for children attending pre-school settings

This will normally be where

- The child has been allocated a place at their nearest Early Years High Needs SEND Base provision and the child lives further than the statutory walking distance between home and the setting, which is over two miles for children less than eight years of age and family circumstance make it not reasonable to expect the parent/carer to take their child to this provision

It is important to bear in mind that the decision to provide travel support to access pre-school education is based on the child's needs. When determining whether to offer travel support those factors to which consideration will not normally be given are listed below.

Consideration **will not** normally be given to:

- Parents' work or other commitments
- Personal circumstances when considering drop off/collection points and times
- If a parent chooses to send their child to a setting that is not the nearest suitable Early Years High Needs SEND Base provision to the home address
- A journey from one educational establishment to another, including for off site training
- School trips (for journeys of this nature the organising school or institution will be responsible for travel arrangements)
- Dental, medical or hospital appointments, or other non-educational appointments
- Children taken ill during the day
- Children who are excluded during the day
- Out of hours clubs (breakfast club, after school activities); for journeys of this nature parents/carers will be responsible for travel arrangements
- Where the child is staying in Short Break (respite) care arranged by a social care worker - requests for support to and from Short Break or Residential Care should be directed to Social Care within the Council. (unless this is the designated collection and drop-off point)

In these instances, a travel solution will be the sole responsibility of the child's parent/carer.

2. Travel Solutions

This section outlines the travel solutions which may be provided for children who are allocated a place in an Early Years High Needs SEND Base provision.

If it is deemed necessary, Bolton Council may agree to provide a travel solution to access education. This will be provided in a safe and cost effective manner, taking account of the child's specific needs and having regard to the best use of the Council's resources.

Cases are considered on an individual basis and medical or other professional evidence may be required before support is agreed. The Council reserves the right to assess the whole family according to their circumstances, in order to offer the most cost effective travel support, using a variety of solutions. The travel solution will be child centred and inclusive of their needs in order to develop independence and confidence.

Taxi or minibus travel support to access education will be provided only where there is no feasible alternative and will be agreed between a designated collection and drop-off point. Variations to the agreed collection/drop-off points will not be accommodated except in exceptional unexpected circumstances.

The Council will assist parents/carers with a travel solution at the beginning and end of each funded session.

Where a travel solution is put in place and either the child and young person fails to utilise the facility or their attendance falls to 85% or below, travel support will be withdrawn and a recharge for the service may be passed onto the parent/carer where there has been persistent failure to notify the Council's Transport Service of non-attendance. Until attendance meets the desired requirements, travel support will remain withdrawn. We understand that some children with SEND can be exceptionally unwell and in these cases once the Integrated Travel Unit is notified of this, a service will only be temporarily withdrawn and will be reinstated once the individual is well enough to return to education.

3. 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 child.

Personal Travel Budget – 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, paying for a bus pass (children under 5 years travel free on buses within Greater Manchester) car mileage and use of a befriending service. Family based travel solutions could also be supported by a Personal Travel Assistance.

Travel Vehicles – In exceptional circumstances the Council may provide a vehicle to transport a child to and from the setting. In such cases the parent/carer may have to provide a suitable car seat for the child. 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, children will travel together in mini-buses. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those children travelling on them. Each route will be planned on the basis of session start and finish times and the shortest possible route for all children 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 to a responsible adult. Passenger Assistants will all have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate. Children 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 child'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 child/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 children 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 children to access their setting in separate taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the child There is an expectation parent/carers will support accompany their child in the rear of the vehicle.

Part B

Travel support to access education for children and young people of Compulsory school (ie to the of 16)

This part of the policy is for children and young people of compulsory school age to the age of 16 with SEND. This policy supports children and young people with SEND to access school at the start of the school day and return home (or to an alternative designated destination) at the end of the school day, each week day during school terms.

1. Legislation and Responsibilities

Bolton Council must ensure that there are suitable travel arrangements for an eligible child to facilitate his/her attendance at school pursuant to Section 508B of the Education Act 1996.

1.1. Parent/Carers Responsibilities

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their compulsory school aged children are registered at a school and attend regularly, or to make suitable arrangements for home education. However, in certain circumstances a Council has a duty to provide travel support to access education to facilitate this attendance. Parents/carers are responsible for their child's safety whilst travelling to and from school. Where the Council has provided a travel solution to support a child to access education, parents/carers remain responsible for their child's safety before and after these arrangements take place.

1.2. Council Responsibilities

In certain circumstances the Council has a statutory duty to provide a suitable travel solution to facilitate a child or young person's attendance at school. This document sets out Bolton Council's policy on Home to School Travel Assistance. It describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as required under the Education Act 1996.

Young people with SEND who are over the age of 16 and under 25 but continuing in education/training are considered separately in Part C.

Under section 508B of the Education Act 1996, the Council has a duty to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are available for an eligible child/young person free of charge as appropriate. This will be carried out, where necessary, to facilitate the child and young person's attendance at a relevant *'qualifying school'. The Act applies to all children and young people who permanently live in Bolton and attend a qualifying school named in their EHCP.

This policy reflects national legislation and statutory guidance. Eligibility for a place at a school does not bring with it an entitlement for travel support to access education. The policy on Home to School Travel Assistance could change before a child and young person completes their time at school. Admission choices should not be made on the assumption that the same set of eligibility criteria will apply throughout a child and young person's education. Acceptance at a special school is no guarantee that transport will be provided.

* Go to Appendix A to see definitions of 'eligible' and 'qualifying school'.

2. Eligibility for a home to school travel solution

2.1. Parental preference for a school

Whilst parents/carers have the right to express a preference for which school they wish

their child to attend, a child and young person who attends a school which is further away than the nearest suitable qualifying school with places available, will not be eligible for travel support, except in exceptional circumstances, even if the distance from home to the school they attend is more than the qualifying walking distance.

Any travelling arrangements or expenses will be the responsibility of parents/carers if there is a nearer suitable qualifying school. It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure their child gets to and from school safely and they should consider the practicalities of choosing a school that is not within the qualifying walking distance (see below).

2.2. Travel Support Requirements

Travel support to access education will be agreed for children and young people with a EHCP where

- The child/young person lives further than the statutory walking distance between home and school, which is over two miles for children under eight years of age or over three miles for children aged eight years old and over and the child has EHCP **and**
- The child/young person attends the nearest qualifying school that is able to meet the needs of the child or young person

OR

- The child/young person lives within the statutory walking distance* but is unable to walk relatively short distances to school owing to disability or mobility difficulties (these may include temporary medical conditions) and family circumstances make it not reasonable to expect the parent/carer to take their child/young person to school. 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.

*All routes will be determined by the shortest walking distance that a child could walk in reasonable safety accompanied as necessary by an adult.

3. Travel Solutions

This section outlines the travel solutions which may be provided for children and young people who meet the eligibility criteria and are of compulsory- school age. Specifically, this section of the policy relates to children and young people who have an EHCP and are attending the nearest suitable qualifying school.

The parent/carer responsibilities are stated in Part **3** of this policy.

If Bolton Council agrees to provide a travel solution to access education it will be provided in a safe and cost effective manner, taking account of the child and young person's specific needs and having regard to the best use of the Council's resources.

Cases are considered on an individual basis and medical or other professional evidence may be required before support is agreed. The Council reserves the right to assess the whole family according to their circumstances, in order to offer the most cost effective travel support, using a variety of solutions. The travel solution will be child/young person centred and inclusive of their needs in order to develop independence and confidence.

Taxi or minibus travel support to access education will be provided only where there is no feasible alternative and will be agreed between a designated collection and drop-off point. Variations to the agreed collection/drop-off points will not be accommodated except in exceptional unexpected circumstances.

For children and young people attending daily, the Council will assist parents/carers with a travel solution at the beginning and end of each school day. For children and young people attending residential placements the Council will assist parents/carers with a travel solution at the beginning and end of the week, if children/young people are attending as a weekly boarder or at the beginning and end of each half term if the children are attending as a 38 week boarder.

A travel solution will only be provided for the normal start and end of the school day and will not include early finish times where schools close early for the end of the half term/ term.

Where a travel solution is put in place and the child/young person fails to either utilise the facility or their school attendance falls to 85% or below a recharge for the service may be passed onto the parent/carer where there has been persistent failure to notify the Council's Transport Service of non-attendance. We understand that some children and young people with SEND can be exceptionally unwell and in these cases once the Integrated Transport Unit is notified of this, a service will be temporarily withdrawn and will be reinstated once the individual is well enough to return to education.

3.1. 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 child/young person to access education.

Personal Travel Budget – Support for meeting the costs associated with ensuring support to access education. 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 child or young person to travel on public transport if the child/young person has 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. 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, children and young people will travel together in mini-buses. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those children and 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 children and 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. Children and 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 child and 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 child/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 children/young people 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 children and young people to access education in separate taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the child or 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 their child into the rear of the vehicle.

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

4. Placement in a Residential Special School

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

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 <u>if it is necessary</u> 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 <u>necessary</u> 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.

8. Other Transport Options

Transport for Greater Manchester
In addition, travel support can be obtained from Concessionary Fares operated by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).

A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) may be offered to subsidise the following:

- **Concessionary Travel -** is offered to disabled people, whatever their age. Depending on individual circumstances this can be free or cheap travel on buses, trains and the Metro link. More information can be obtained from TfGM on 0161 244 1050.

- **Ring and Ride Service -** provides door-to-door transport for people who find it very difficult or impossible to get to a bus stop or get on or off ordinary buses. The service is not intended for daily travel to or from school/college, but could help a young person with other journeys. The Bolton Ring and Ride Service can be accessed via http://www.ringandride.info/index.htm. Telephone Enquiries: 0845 688 4933 or 0161 200 6011, Telephone Bookings: 0845 688 3989.

- **A Travel Voucher Scheme -** is available for people who are unable to use ordinary buses and who have serious walking difficulties or are registered blind. Vouchers are not free, but are substantially discounted. If young people have any queries about the scheme, they should phone TfGM on 0161 244 1050.

Address:
2 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BG
Tel: 0161 244 1000 General enquiries (7am to 8pm, Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm Saturday and Sunday)

Part D

Application, Review and Appeals processes

1. Application Process

The parent/carer or young person must make a formal application for travel support to access education before any assistance is considered. Each application will be processed as quickly as possible in chronological date order of receipt. The Council may request the provision of written evidence from education specialists and/or medical experts. This will include the parent/carers permission to access the child/young person's EHCP and any relevant medical advice It remains the legal responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their compulsory school aged child attends school regularly.

In most cases, travel support to access education will be co-ordinated by the Council's Integrated Transport Unit. In some cases this responsibility may lie with specific named schools and/or colleges. Therefore, parents/carers and young people should check the local arrangements at their child and young person's school or college before making an application for travel support to the Council.

1.1. Application Overview

The application process is designed to be as simple as possible whilst ensuring that full consideration is given to the specific needs of the child or young person. An initial evaluation will then determine whether travel support to access education is likely to be approved. The parent/carer/young person will be informed of the outcome within 10 working days of receiving the application. Parents/carers/young people should allow up to 30 working days from the date the application was received to the start of any approved travel support to access education.

If the application form does not contain enough information to complete the initial evaluation it will be returned to the parent/carer/young person. The 30 day consultation period will commence on the receipt of the updated application.

1.2. The application process is dealt with in four stages:

Stage 1

Parent/carer/young person completes a Travel Assistance Application Form. This application form can be obtained from and when completed returned to:

Integrated Transport Unit
Mayor St Depot
Ellesmere St
Bolton
Bl3 5DT

Email to: ITU.applications@bolton.gov.uk

Stage 2 – Receipt of the application

On receipt of the application an assessment of eligibility will be undertaken. This stage will include the gathering and evaluation of written evidence and parental circumstances. It will usually include consultation with the school/college concerned, caseworkers and any other relevant specialists and the parent/carer/young person. At this stage the application will either progress to Stage 3 or be declined. The parent/carer/young person will receive a letter notifying them of the decision and the letter will outline the reasons for the decision.

Stage 3 – **Risk Assessment of child/young person's travel requirements**
Once the application has been approved a member of the Transport Team will contact the parent/carer/young person and may make arrangements for a home visit. The Officer will complete and discuss with the parent/carer/young person the travel review paperwork or will send this to the home address for completion. This is to determine the needs of the child/young person including physical, medical, health and behavioural information. This will form a risk assessment which the parents/carers/young person will be asked to sign. The Officer will also ask, where appropriate, the parent/carer and/or the child/young person to sign a Code of Conduct. The Integrated Travel Team reserves the right to withdraw the travel solution if the child/young person or parent/carer refuses to sign the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct outlines the rules to which children and young people must abide by to ensure the health and safely of themselves and others when travelling to and from school/college.

Stage 4 – Deciding on a travel solution
The Travel Review Officer will determine a travel solution. The Council will make all the necessary arrangements to implement the travel solution. Parents/carers and a young person should allow up to 30 working days from the date the application was received to the start of any approved travel support to access education and training. If the application appears likely to take longer due to specific circumstances beyond the control of the Council, the parent/carer/young person will be notified by the Council and an estimate of the actual time needed to process the application will be given.

2. Review process

The travel solution will be reviewed on a regular basis in order to ensure that the support offered continues to meet the needs of the child/young person. Whenever possible, travel solutions will be reviewed alongside EHC Plan annual reviews and at transition points for year 6 to 7, year 11 to 12, year 14 to15 and year 17 to 18.

You will be reminder to apply each year. This will include a review of the child/young person's needs and the travel solution. At this stage alternative travel solutions may be discussed.

3. Changes in Circumstances

It is the parent/carers/young person's responsibility to inform the Council of any changes in their circumstances. A change in circumstances may mean a previously declined application may be accepted and the parent/carer/young person is able to reapply. In addition, a change in circumstances for an existing travel solution may mean it no longer meets the eligibility criteria and the travel solution could be withdrawn. The Council will decide when the withdrawal of a travel solution takes place and will take into account the term and year of education and the impact on the child/young person.

Changes in circumstances include:

- A change in home address
- A move from one school to another
- Transition from primary to secondary school and transition from secondary school to college
- A change in medical and physical conditions
- A move into Local Authority care

4. Health and Safety

Whilst every effort is made to identify a travel solution to meet the needs of a child/young person there will be circumstances when the travel solution will need to be reviewed as it is not working. Whilst acknowledging the impact of their SEND on the behaviour of some children and young people, where a child/young person's conduct compromises the safety of anyone travelling with them, the Council reserves the right to suspend or withdraw the travel solution.

There is an expectation that the parent/carer and/or the child/young person signs a Code of Conduct. The Integrated Transport Unit reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a travel solution if the child/young person or parent/carer refuses to sign the Code of Conduct.

A travel solution will be withdrawn if for example, but not limited to:

- It is felt that the child or young person has the capacity to learn from this sanction and a 'cooling off' period would be beneficial
- The child or young person's continued presence in a vehicle (where this is the travel solution) presents an unacceptable risk to the health or safety of themselves or others

The Council reserves the right to immediately withdraw a travel solution if the severity of the incident is such that withdrawal is necessary to ensure that the duty of care for the child/young person or other children/young people and staff is maintained. Parents/carers will be expected to ensure their child's and young person's continued attendance at school when a travel solution is withdrawn.
Analysis of the risk will be made of any given incident and the following procedures will be put in place:

- On issue of the first suspension the case will be reviewed on an individual basis
- A second issue of suspension may be given, if once travel support resumes, improvements are not maintained
- At the issue of a third suspension and upon consideration of all circumstances, the existing travel solution will be reviewed and may be removed. A new solution will be offered following discussion with the Education staff and the child/young person's family.

5. Appeals Process

If an application for travel support to access education is **not** approved by the Council, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer/young person with an appeals form.

If the parent/carer/young person disagrees with the travel solution offered or the decision not to approve the application, there is a right of appeal.

Appeals should be made within 20 working days of the decision being received by the parent/carer/young person. The appeal should be made in writing, setting out the exact nature and grounds of the appeal. The Appeal should include the details of personal and or family circumstances the parent/carer/young person believes should be considered. Parents/carers/young people can appeal against the travel solution offered, the child/young person's eligibility, the distance measured in relation to statutory walking distances and safety of the route.

The Appeals Process has two stages:

Stage 1 – Review/Appeal of the original decision

The Manager of Integrated Transport Team will consider the review. The Review of Decision/Appeals Form is available from Integrated Transport Team on Bolton Council's web page:
https://www.bolton.gov.uk/school-travel/assistance-transport-costs-school-college

or by email to ITU.applications@bolton.gov.uk
or by phone: 01204 337957

The parent/carer/young person will receive confirmation the review is being considered. Further evidence may be requested to support this and consultation with caseworkers and professional bodies may be required. A decision and notification will be made within 20 working days from receipt of the Review of Decision/Appeals form.

The notification will include the nature of the decision reached, how the appeal was conducted and information about other agencies and departments that were consulted as part of the appeal process. An overview will be given of the factors that were considered, the rationale for the decision reached and information of how to proceed to Stage 2.

If the parent/carer/young person remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they should notify the Council in writing within 20 working days of receiving the decision. If the parent/carer wishes the matter to be considered further, the parent/carer/young person should request the matter proceeds to Appeal to Stage 2.

Stage 2

If the parent/carer/young person is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 the appeal moves to Stage 2. Within 40 working days the appeal will be heard by the Council's Education Assistance which comprises elected members of Bolton Council. The parent/carer/young person will be invited to attend the Stage 2 appeal

A Stage Two appeal will consider the evidence gathered and the reasons for the decision being made at Stage 1.

The parent/carer/young person will be notified 5 working days after the decision for the Stage 2 appeal.

The notification to the parent/carer/young person will include the nature of the decision reached, how the appeal was conducted, information about other agencies/departments that were consulted as part of the appeal process and what factors were considered and the rationale for the decision reached.

During the appeal stages, travel support to access education will not be provided or a change to an existing travel solution will not be instigated.

A Stage 2 decision is final.

6. Corporate Complaints Team

If the parent/carer/young person is dissatisfied with the way in which the appeals procedure has been managed they have the right to make a formal complaint to the Corporate Complaints Team. This is not an additional stage to the appeals process.

Corporate Complaints Team
Bolton council
Town hall
Bolton
BL1 1RU

Email: CCCGroup@bolton.gov.uk

Telephone: 01204 338021

7. Local Government Ombudsmen

A complaint to the Local Government Ombudsmen can be made by the parent/carer/young person only if there has been a failure to comply with the procedural rules or there has been maladministration of the policy.
Visit their website on https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint

Telephone: 0300 061 0614.

Alternatively, you can write to:

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry CV4 0EH

Appendix A

Glossary of standard definitions used in the policy

Parent /Carer
In this policy parent/carer is taken to mean the adult responsible for the child/young person and can refer to the adult who has parental responsibility, guardianship or care of the child.

Children Looked after (CLA)
A child who is being looked after by the local authority is known as a child in care. These are children who are subject to a care order or accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989. The local authority will continue to support these children when they leave care until the age of 21 under the leaving care provisions.

Children in care can be:

- Living with foster parents
- At home with their parents as a Looked After Child/young person under the supervision of social care
- In residential children's homes or other residential settings such as schools or secure units.

Eligible child/young person
Eligible children as defined in Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 may be taken to belong to one of the following groups:
An eligible child and young person is one of compulsory school age who is resident within Bolton and has/is:

- Special Educational Needs (SEN), a disability or mobility problem and cannot reasonably be expected to walk to the school
- Children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because of the nature of the route (accompanied as necessary)
- Living outside the statutory walking distance, where no suitable alternative arrangements have been made by the Local Authority for them to attend either boarding accommodation or a qualifying school nearer to the child young person's home.
- Entitled to free school meals, and/ or whose family is in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Compulsory school age
A child becomes of compulsory school age when he/she reaches the age of five and must start school in the term following his/her fifth birthday.
In England, a young person's leaving age depends on when the young person was born. A young person must stay in some form of education or training until your 18th birthday if you were born on or after 1st September 1997.

A young person's 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

Qualifying school
The nearest qualifying school is taken to mean the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child/young person and any special educational needs that the child/young person may have.

Home
The home address will be the main base from which any travel solution will be offered.

If the child/young person lives in two different homes, for example if the parents are separated, and the child spends some of the week at both homes, the Council will only provide transport to and from one of those addresses.

To decide which of the homes is the child's main home, the Council will consider:

- The address at which the parent claims Working Tax Credit and Child Benefit
- The address the parent gives as the child's doctor, dentist and so on

If the above does not apply and the child spends an equal amount of the school week at each address, the council will usually consider the main address to be the one where the child wakes up on the most school days during the school term (Monday to Friday).

Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
Schools and other educational settings should be able to meet the Special Educational Needs of the vast majority of children and young people through the resources available to them at SEN Support. A small number of children and young people require a more intensive level of specialist help and support via an Education, Health and Care Plan. An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan) is a legal document outlining a child/young person's special educational needs and the provision required in order to meet these needs.

Parents can ask the local authority to carry out an assessment if parents think the child needs an EHC plan although most requests should come through the child's educational setting.

Full-time Education (post 16)
Full time education for Post 16 is education undertaken in pursuit of a course, where an average of more than 12 hours per week is spent during term time.