

# **Provision of Home to School Transport for Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

## **Policy Statement**

### **Introduction**

This statement explains the policy of the London Borough of Haringey towards special home to school transport for pupils with complex additional educational needs or other special circumstances. It outlines how decisions are made concerning the entitlement of pupils to special transport and how parents may appeal against a decision that they are unhappy with.

If the Council agrees to transport a child to school, it will arrange transport in the most cost effective way bearing in mind the needs of the child. This may be by bus, minibus, taxi or by issuing a season ticket, bus pass or by paying car mileage as appropriate.

### **The children and young people covered by this Policy Statement**

Children and young people may be eligible for the provision of free home to school transport if they have complex special educational needs such that it is not possible for them to travel independently between home and school. Where pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, special transport may be required to meet needs and will be clearly specified.

When assessing entitlement, the Council will pay due regard to supporting medical or other evidence that indicates that a pupil or student cannot travel independently. Due regard will also be given to the age of the pupil or young person. Young children, for example, do not normally travel independently between home and school. Parents will normally be responsible for such journeys. Age will not, in itself, indicate entitlement to free special transport.

The general Haringey Policy towards the provision of home to school transport will apply to all children and young people who do not have needs as described above. This includes journeys between home, special schools and Pupil Referral Units.

### **How eligibility for special transport will be decided**

#### ***For pupils with Statements***

Reports gathered during the course of Statutory Assessment will provide detailed information on the special educational needs experienced by children and young people. Where a child's special educational needs are such that the child is unable to walk to school, the doctor carrying out the medical examination for the statutory assessment will consider the need for transport. When transport is agreed on this basis, a note to this effect will be included in Part 6 of the child's Statement of Special Educational Needs. Such transport will usually be door- to-door.

Many pupils with Statements have learning needs that do not affect their mobility or ability to travel between home and school in the same way as other children. Statements will not specify the need for home to school transport in such circumstances and the general Haringey policy towards home to school transport will apply.

Some pupils who attend special schools do not have such complex needs. In these circumstances provision for home to school transport will not be included in a Statement. Transport may still be provided because of the distance that a pupil lives from school but this may not be on a door-to-door basis. The general Haringey Policy towards the provision of home to school transport will apply in such circumstances.

The SEN Panel determines entitlement to special transport. When making a decision it will consider:

- Whether or not evidence obtained through Statutory Assessment indicates the need for a Statement; and, if so
- The needs and provision that should be written into a Statement.

### ***For pupils without Statements***

Pupils without Statements may be entitled to special home to school transport in some circumstances. The SEN Panel will consider requests individually and will base decisions on the availability of supporting medical and / or psychological evidence indicating that a pupil has needs of such complexity that independent travel between home and school is not possible.

### ***For pupils in their early years with complex needs***

Some pre school children may be entitled to special home to school transport. This may be provided following an assessment for a Statement or because there is clear evidence that a pupil has complex special educational needs or difficulties with mobility. Special transport will not be provided for reasons of age alone.

### **Entitlement to special transport 16+**

Students up to the age of 19 years may benefit from the provision of special transport in some circumstances. This may be provided in cases where there is clear medical evidence that a student has difficulties with mobility of such complexity that it is impossible to travel independently between home and school or college. To be eligible, students must be following a full time course of further study at the nearest appropriate college leading to, or working towards, a recognised qualification.

The SEN Panel will consider whether or not students over the age of 16 are eligible for the provision of special transport. Decisions will be based upon medical advice and / or evidence of need in previous reports or Statements of Special Educational Need.

Students between the ages of 19 and 25 may be eligible for special transport if they attend the nearest appropriate provision and if such transport is necessary to enable them to complete a full-time course of Further Education study leading to a recognised qualification.

Students over the age of 25 are not eligible for special transport as outlined in this policy.

### **Entitlement when parents express a preference for a school**

Special transport will be provided for eligible pupils or students to the nearest appropriate school or college with space. On occasions, parents may decide to send a child to a school of their choice that is further from a pupil's home. The Council will not provide free home to school transport in such circumstances.

On occasions, and where space permits, it may be possible to make a discretionary place available on a vehicle for a pupil where a parent / carer has expressed a preference of an alternative school. In these circumstances, a place is provided on the understanding that it may be withdrawn if the Council requires the seat for another pupil. A charge of £60 per term is made for discretionary places.

### **The provision of transport to support inclusion within mainstream schools**

Haringey Borough Council supports the inclusion of children and young people within mainstream settings whenever possible. Where this is compatible with the efficient operation of home to school transport, every effort will be made to vary routes to enable pupils, who normally go to a special school, to attend a mainstream school on a part-time basis. Such transport will normally be provided only at the start or end of the school day.

The school that a pupil normally attends will be responsible for other transport during the school day.

### **Escorts on home to school transport**

Escorts will be provided on home to school transport where they are necessary to support the safe operation of vehicles and care of children. Decisions about whether or not an escort is required will be made in consideration of:

- The age of the pupils being transported
- Medical needs and disabilities
- Other health and safety issues
- The number of children on a vehicle

It is the parents' and Carer's responsibility to lift children in and out of vehicles, where necessary. Escorts will always give reasonable assistance where possible.

### **Encouraging Independence**

It is the aim of Haringey Council that all children and young people should lead lives that are as independent and free of restriction as possible. Special home to school transport will be reviewed at least annually to determine whether or not it is still required. Where children and young people are able to travel independently, they will be encouraged to do so.

For pupils with Statements, the Annual Review will include consideration whether special home to school transport is still required. Annual Reviews will consider pupil's independent travel skills and schools will draw up independent travel training programmes where appropriate.

### **Transport to residential schools**

Transport to residential schools will normally be provided on a weekly basis. However, if the school is a considerable distance from the pupil's home, transport may be provided less frequently. Where journeys are likely to be in excess of three hours, transport will be provided every two weeks or, in some circumstances, at the start and end of each half-term.

Some children attend schools for 52 weeks of each year. Transport between home and school for these pupils will be assessed individually and will take into account their care and education needs as outlined in Care Plans and Personal Education Plans. It will not normally be weekly.

### **Children who are looked after by Haringey Council**

Special transport between home and school may be provided for children and young people who are looked after by the Council. Such transport may be considered when a pupil moves home whilst continuing to attend his / her original school. For younger children experiencing a temporary move, such transport will normally be provided for up to one term. Pupils below Key Stage 4 in long-term placements are expected to transfer to a local school as soon as possible. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, transport may be provided to enable the pupil to complete an examination course. Journeys should not normally exceed one hour.

The Council will seek to ensure continuity of education. Multiple moves should be avoided and transport may be provided to enable a pupil to complete a Key Stage or on a longer-term basis in some exceptional circumstances. Decisions will be informed by multi-agency planning for Personal Education Plans.

### **Appeals**

Every effort will be made to resolve the concerns of parents or carers. However, if a parent or carer wishes to appeal against a decision of Haringey Council concerning home to school transport he / she may do so by contacting the officer responsible. If it is not possible to resolve a complaint at this stage a parent / carer will be entitled to ask for the decision to be reviewed by a second, more senior officer.

For pupils with Statements, the provision of special home to school transport may be specified. However, if it is not, then the normal home to school transport policy for Haringey will apply and special transport will not be provided. Parents have a right of Appeal to the SEN Tribunal where they are unhappy with the contents of a new or amended Statement and where they are unable to resolve their concerns locally.

## **Complaints**

The Haringey complaints procedure will apply in cases of complaint about home to school transport provision.

## **Annex 1**

### **Standards**

#### **Route Scheduling**

- Routes will be scheduled in the most economical and timely manner but with some degree of flexibility to accommodate, where practicable, medical and domestic factors involving the passenger concerned.
- Wherever practicable the transportation of mixed needs passengers will be avoided
- Journey times for individual passengers will not exceed one hour for establishments within the Borough or within a five-mile radius of the Civic Centre.
- Crews will be allocated to regular routes and given individual work schedules to ensure continuity of service and security of the passengers. Notwithstanding all staff will be able to undertake any specified daily duty.
- Passenger pick-up and set-down times will be adhered to within plus or minus five minutes.
- If the passenger is not available at the specified address the driver will wait for up to three minutes before departing and continuing the journey to the destination.
- If the parent/carer does not meet the passenger at the agreed set-down address for the homeward bound journey the driver will wait up to three minutes before departing to complete the journey. The driver will then return to the agreed set-down address and wait up to a further three minutes. In the event the passenger is still not met then the passenger will be taken to a place of safety and a letter of explanation will be posted through the door.
- Routes will be planned to conform to the arrival times specified by the education establishment concerned.
- Parents/carers will be notified of pick-up and set-down times, the name of the driver and escort, the name of the contractor where used and the relevant contact telephone numbers.

#### **Drivers**

- All drivers will hold a clean, current PCV (manual) driver's licence. Driver's licences will be checked annually.
- All drivers will understand and be experienced in undertaking their responsibilities in the transportation of passengers with physical needs and/or learning difficulties including adults who may be frail and have varying degrees of disabilities.
- All drivers will be subjected to a satisfactory police check in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Such police checks will be repeated at a frequency of three years.
- All drivers will be appropriately dressed and will bear personal identity badges including their name and photograph.

- All drivers will receive the following training:
  - Awareness of the multicultural diversity of the passengers concerned.
  - Lifting and Handling Techniques.
  - Vehicle Fire Evacuation.
  - First Aid.
  - Use of tail lifts, wheelchairs and occupant restraint systems.
  - Dealing with aggressive and challenging behaviour.
- Drivers will demonstrate the highest standards of civility and courtesy to their passengers, parents/carers, other Council employees and members of the public.
- Each driver will be issued with a mobile telephone for means of communicating with the transport office and schools.
- Drivers will drive their vehicles in a safe legal manner in full consideration of the safety, comfort and wellbeing of their passengers and the needs of other users of the public highway.
- Drivers, in the course of the journey, will only leave the interior of the vehicle in order to operate the tail-lift equipment and to make essential safety checks on the vehicle in emergency situations. In all cases the driver will only leave the interior of the vehicle provided that the escort is in attendance on the vehicle throughout any such period of absence to ensure the safety of the passengers.

## Escorts

- The duties of the escort are as follows:
  - (i) To accompany the driver of the vehicle to the homes of the passengers
  - (ii) To ensure that the passengers are safely boarded onto the vehicle depending on the nature of the disability e.g. assisting onto the vehicle; placing wheelchair onto tail-lift; securing handbrakes and, where appropriate, accompanying passengers onto the tail-lift; placing passengers from the tail-lift onto the designated position in the vehicle and, where required, ensuring passengers are safely and comfortably seated.
  - (iii) To decide on the seating arrangements on the vehicle following medical, Head Teacher's or other practitioner's advice.
  - (iv) To be responsible for the safe keeping of valuables, medication and medical aids belonging to the passengers.
  - (v) To be responsible for the care, safety, well-being and welfare of the passengers at all times.
  - (vi) To be aware of changes of passenger behaviour during the journey in order to anticipate/prevent problems.

- (vii) To carry out basic first aid, to ensure in the event of an emergency medical assistance is sought as soon as possible
  - (viii) In certain life threatening circumstances to administer medication following appropriate training and assessment.
  - (ix) To liaise with schools and parents in matters affecting the passengers on the journey.
  - (x) To ensure that passengers are handed over safely upon their arrival at the appointed destination.
- To wear appropriate dress and personal identification badge including name and photograph.
  - All escorts will be subjected to a satisfactory police check in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Such police checks will be repeated at a frequency of three years.
  - All escorts will understand and be experienced in undertaking their responsibilities in the care of passengers with physical needs and/or learning difficulties including adults who may be frail and have varying degrees of disabilities.
  - Escorts will demonstrate the highest standards of civility and courtesy to their passengers, parents/carers, other Council employees and members of the public.
  - All escorts will receive the following training:
    - Awareness of the multicultural diversity of the passengers concerned.
    - Lifting and Handling Techniques.
    - Vehicle Fire Evacuation.
    - First Aid.
    - Use of tail lifts, wheelchairs and occupant restraint systems.
    - Dealing with aggressive and challenging behaviour.

## **Vehicles**

- All vehicles will be in full compliance with all relevant current UK and EC legislation governing the use of vehicles and any other regulations that may be in force as laid down by the Secretary of State for the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions.
- The mechanical condition of each vehicle will be inspected daily and defects affecting the legal operation and safety of the vehicle will be corrected before putting into service.
- Vehicles will be maintained and serviced to all relevant EC Legislative and manufacturer's requirements.
- Vehicles will be provided in a clean condition both internally and externally and equipped with adequate heating and ventilation equipment.
- All vehicles will be of an appropriate size and seating capacity that takes into consideration the needs of the passengers and the accessibility of the destination site concerned.
- Vehicle specification will include the following construction details:

- Conformity to the latest DPTAC regulations.
- Forward facing high back seating easily converted to accommodate wheelchair access.
- Externally mounted (hydraulic tail-lift), where applicable.
- All age lap & diagonal seat belts integral with seat.
- Seat, seat belts, locking mechanisms and tracking systems to be tested and certified to the requirements of seat belt legislation for M2 category vehicles i.e. ECE R 14.03 or EEC 76/115 as a complete system within the vehicle.
- Fire extinguisher (BS 5423).
- First aid box plus kit to deal with body spillages.

### **Quality.**

- Qualitative and Quantitative performance monitoring on service delivery across all functions of the service will take place to include:
  - Annual reviews of user perceptions in the form of questionnaires to parents/carers schools, etc.
  - Monitoring service targets with regard to punctuality journey times, etc.
  - Assessing staff views on training needs and monitoring effects of training by continuous assessment.
  - Monthly budget monitoring.
  - Monitoring of resource utilisation.
  - Vehicle accidents.
  - Sickness and accident monitoring.
  - Use of agency and temporary staff.

### **Responsibilities of Parents / Carers**

Each parent/carer will be provided with a copy of a booklet setting out guidelines for the travel arrangements which will include a brief synopsis of the law, and the Council's policy together with the standards expected, appeals and complaints procedures.

Parents/Carers will be encouraged to play an important role in ensuring the smooth running of their child's transport arrangements by:

- Ensuring their child is ready at least five minutes before the vehicle is due to arrive. (The vehicle will wait no longer than three minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.)
- Ensuring that there is a responsible adult present to meet the child at home or at the agreed destination on each and every occasion the child returns from school. (The child will be taken to a place of safety if a responsible adult is not at home or at the agreed destination.)
- Telephoning the transport office and the school in the event their child is not able to attend school for whatever reason.

- Telephoning the transport office on the day before the child is ready to return to school after an absence period exceeding one day.
- Advising the driver and/or escort in respect of any assistance required in lifting the child in and out of the vehicle (It is not the responsibility of either the driver or the escort to lift the child.)
- Ensuring that the child understands the standards of behaviour expected whilst travelling to and from school. (In the event of serious disruptive behaviour the escort has the right after receiving authorisation from the transport office to exclude the child from the vehicle.)

## Responsibilities of Schools

The schools have a responsibility in respect of contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of the transport provision by:

- Ensuring that adequate access and parking arrangements are made for vehicles in order to facilitate the safe transfer of pupils between the vehicle and the school building.
- Providing the transport office with the dates of school holidays for the academic year at least two weeks before the close of the previous academic year.
- Providing the transport office with at least one week's notice of additional dates when schools will be closed.
- Ensuring that staff meets the vehicle and transfer pupils between the vehicle and the school building.
- Advising the driver and/or escort in respect of any assistance required in lifting the pupil in and out of the vehicle.
- Ensuring that pupils are ready before the vehicle is due to arrive.

