



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Home to School Travel Assistance Policy 2015/16

**HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF
HILLINGDON**

Children and Young People between 5 and 16¹ years of age

¹ Please refer to the Council's 'Post 16 Transport to Education and Training Policy Statement' for further information regarding travel assistance for students over the age of 16

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out how, and under which circumstances, the London Borough of Hillingdon (the Council) will provide transport to children of compulsory school age between home and school. It specifically relates to transport between home and school at the start and end of the school day and outlines the responsibilities that parents/carers, children/young people and the Council have in this process.

Travel Assistance is provided from the child's home address to their educational establishment and back to the home address.

Hillingdon has adopted two key principles which underpin a culture of providing travel assistance:

- promoting independence;
- maintaining quality of life.

By working in partnership with parents, children and young people, schools and the voluntary sector, Hillingdon aims to secure the right option for each child so they are better prepared to enter adulthood confidently as active participants in society.

This policy explains the way in which the Council may help with the transport needs of those children/young people who qualify for assistance as a result of specific special educational needs, disability or other mobility difficulties.

1.1 Travel Assistance - definition

The term 'Travel Assistance' refers to the various different means of transport that are available to support eligible pupils in Hillingdon. Examples include:

- Free travel on buses for children under the age of 18 and in full time education²
- Personal Transport Budgets³
- Independent Travel Training⁴
- Motorised transport provided by the Council

Hillingdon Council recognises the importance of extending the range of transport options available so that the most suitable arrangements can be made to support individual needs whilst promoting independence.

Local authorities only have a duty to provide free travel assistance where there are no suitable arrangements relating to travel between the child(ren)'s home and school provided free of charge by any other person (for example Transport for London). In that regard, it is expected the availability of free bus travel within Greater London will meet educational travelling needs in most cases. This means that even if your child is eligible for travel assistance, including the low income criteria, their needs are likely to be met through access to free public transport.

² Provided by Transport for London - <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/travel-for-under-18s/zip-oyster-photocards?intcmp=25258>

³ Please visit the following website for more information - <http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/28909>

⁴ Please visit the following website for more information - <http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/hillingdon/fds/site.page?id=QfL4WSKr8B8>

In each case Hillingdon Council will consider whether the provision of free public transport is suitable for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at school, including whether there may be exceptional circumstances where additional travel costs may arise due to travel outside the scope of the free pass (e.g. rail or underground or non-Transport for London bus travel).

In order to determine eligibility for travel assistance, all applications must be made in accordance with the requirements set out in this policy and will be assessed on an individual basis against the various criteria.

1.2 Principles, Roles & Responsibilities of the Council

1.2.1 The Council is committed to providing free home to school transport in order to meet its statutory obligations. In so doing the Council will:

- provide equitable, safe, efficient and cost effective transport for pupils entitled to transport in accordance with the Council's duties and powers as provided for in legislation;
- ensure information is made accessible for parents/carers so that they are aware of their entitlement;
- regularly review eligibility for transport to ensure that those who are receiving transport remain eligible;
- monitor the take-up of services to ensure that access is fair and equitable;
- support sustainable modes of travel to school. As well as helping to boost children's fitness and concentration levels, walking and cycling helps to reduce the congestion caused by the journey to school, together with the associated accidents, pollution and carbon emissions.

1.2.2 The Hillingdon Transport Team (HTT) is specifically responsible for:

- administering this and any other policies, determined by the Council, which govern eligibility for travel assistance;
- determining eligibility and identifying the transport needs of individual pupils;
- commissioning all home to school transport;
- managing the overall budget for home to school travel assistance;
- planning and securing the most appropriate and cost effective home to school transport;
- day to day management of all home to school transport provision;

- establishment of operating standards;
- contract management and compliance with operating standards and policy objectives;
- management of the Council's in-house passenger transport fleet as required.

1.3 General Policy Statement

- 1.3.1 This statement sets out the way in which the Council exercises its powers and duties to provide home to school travel assistance in accordance with Section 509 of the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- 1.3.2 The Council will provide free travel assistance for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at their nearest suitable (qualifying) school and live more than the statutory walking distance from it, i.e. two miles for children aged under the age of eight and three miles for children aged eight and over. The Council makes no general transport provision for children under the age of compulsory education, or for children of any age who attend private schools or colleges except in the case where a private (independent) school is named in the Statement or EHC plan and the Council agree that it is the nearest school or college that can meet the needs of the child/young person.
- 1.3.3 The nearest suitable school includes the Council's designated catchment area school or, if closer than the designated catchment area school, the nearest qualifying school that is deemed by the Council as suitable to a particular child's age and need requirements. In all cases the distance to the school must exceed the statutory walking distance.
- 1.3.4 In all other circumstances the Council will not usually provide free travel assistance or contribute towards the cost of transport.
- 1.3.5 The above statements are intended as a general guide and are without prejudice to the full policy set out below. A parent/carer may appeal against a transport decision through the Council's formal Appeals Process.

1.4 Equality Statement

- 1.4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in respect of the following characteristics:
1. age
 2. disability
 3. gender reassignment
 4. marriage and civil partnership
 5. pregnancy and maternity

6. race
7. religion or belief
8. sex
9. sexual orientation

1.4.2 This policy is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. This assessment will be integral to all future policy and guidance reviews.

1.5 Safeguarding

1.5.1 The Council and its partners recognise that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Whether their interest is in all young people 'staying safe' in all aspects of our services, or whether they are working in specific areas of vulnerability all staff, including drivers and passenger assistants will have appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident in carrying them out. Schools, settings, children, young people and their parents/carers or any member of the community should feel secure that they can raise any issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children and know that they will be listened to and be taken seriously.

1.5.2 This will be achieved by maintaining an ethos of commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is supported by a clear child protection policy, appropriate induction and training as well as briefings and refreshed learning to ensure compliance with current legislation and guidelines.

1.5.3 The Council acts as a Corporate Parent for Children in Care. This means that the Council has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of support that any good parent/carer would provide his or her own child. This policy has been written in line with these principles.

1.6 Roles & Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

1.6.1 It is the responsibility of a child's parent/carer to:

- ensure the reasonable safety of themselves and their child(ren) between home and the designated pick up point, and from the designated drop-off point and home;
- understand the provisions within the home to school travel assistance policy;
- make necessary arrangements for attendance at an appropriate school or other setting, including submitting applications as necessary for admission and for travel assistance to the Council;
- to make arrangements, when not available themselves, for their child to be accompanied by a responsible person as necessary

when walking to and from school or to and from a pick up point who will wait with the child until the vehicle arrives;

- ensure the child knows what to do if for any reason the vehicle does not arrive: for example, this could be returning home, going to a neighbour or telephoning the parent/carer for assistance;
- notify the HTT of any change of address or telephone number in good time. The Council will not be responsible for any interruption of service provided to a child or any other consequential difficulty from not having an up-to-date address or operational telephone number;
- provide evidence of personal circumstances in support of any application or appeal for travel assistance;
- submit any appeal to the Council.

1.6.2 All parents/carers whose child(ren) are in receipt of travel assistance from the Council will be required to sign and return a copy of the Parent/Carer Travel Assistance Agreement.

1.7 Implementation and Monitoring of the Policy

1.7.1 The HTT will be responsible for the implementation of this policy through the development of internal processes designed to ensure the ability to monitor service delivery and regular reviews for those in receipt of the service. Data managed by the HTT will be reviewed and monitored within the Disability Service on a regular basis.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Statutory Requirements

2.1.1 Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. However, under the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Council has a duty to provide assistance with travel to and from qualifying establishments for children and young people aged 5 - 16 in certain circumstances.

2.1.2 In addition, the Council also has a duty to facilitate access to full-time education for young people aged 16-19 and this may include assistance with travel in certain circumstances. Other post 16 learners with special educational needs and disabilities aged 16-25 attending colleges and other places of learning may also be eligible for assistance.

2.1.3 There is no mandatory entitlement to travel assistance for children under the age of 5.

2.1.4 Under s508A of the Education Act 1996, the Council must produce annually a strategy on sustainable modes of travel for children and persons of sixth form age travelling to and from their places of education.

The strategy is intended to improve the physical well-being of those who use the “sustainable modes of travel” and/or the environmental well-being of Hillingdon.

- 2.1.5 Under s508B of the Education Act 1996, the Council must provide such travel arrangements as are considered necessary to get every “eligible child” to their “relevant educational establishment”. Travel arrangements for an eligible child must under s508B be free of charge and may not require participants to incur extra costs. The Council may also choose to provide travel assistance to those who do not qualify as eligible children but these arrangements may include a requirement under s508C for the child or their parent/s to pay some or all of the costs.

2.2 Local Application of Statutory Duty

- 2.2.1 The provision of travel assistance by Hillingdon Council will be based on individual needs and circumstances and with regard to the efficient use of resources.

3. ELIGIBILITY & ENTITLEMENT

3.1 General Policy for ALL Children

- 3.1.1 A child of statutory school age who meets one of the following criteria will be provided with free travel arrangements to school as follows:
- A child aged under 8 years who attends either the catchment area school designated by the Council or the nearest qualifying school but lives more than 2 miles from the school, by the shortest available walking route, unless parents voluntarily make suitable alternative arrangements.
 - A child aged between 8 and 16 years who attends either the catchment area school designated by the Council or the nearest qualifying school but lives more than 3 miles from the school, by the shortest available walking route, unless parents voluntarily make suitable alternative arrangements.
- 3.1.2 A child aged 8 years of age who is entitled to transport under the above distance criteria will continue to receive free travel assistance until the end of the academic year in which he/she reaches the age of eight.

3.2 Extended Rights to Transport

- 3.2.1 A child of statutory school age who is from a low income family (see 3.3 below) and meets one of the following criteria will be provided with free travel arrangements to school as follows:
- A child who attends school and is aged between 8 and 10 and lives more than 2 miles from their nearest qualifying school.

- A child who attends school and is aged between 11 and 16 who attends one of his or her three nearest qualifying schools and lives more than 2 miles but less than 6 miles from the school.
- A child who attends school and is aged between 11 and 16 years who attends a qualifying school preferred by his or her parents on grounds of religion or belief and where no other suitable school is available and lives more than 2 miles but not more than 15 miles from the school.

3.3 Low Income - extended rights

3.3.1 Children from low income families are defined in legislation as those entitled to free school meals, or whose family receives the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Annual confirmation of low-income status is required. Assistance will usually be withdrawn if a family ceases to hold low-income status. To qualify the child(ren) will need to be entitled to free school meals because their parent/carer receives one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (income related)
- Child Tax Credit with income less than £16,190.00 (unless you claim Working Tax Credit) - form TC602(A)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit

3.4 Home Address

3.4.1 Children who live in a joint home arrangement, who fulfill the other criteria for free transport, will be provided with travel assistance from the primary home address registered with their school and the Council. The Council will not normally provide travel assistance to or from any other address.

3.5 Walking Route - Distance Measurement

3.5.1 The walking distance between home and school is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety. As such, the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads.

3.6 Catchment Area School

3.6.1 The catchment area school is defined as the school designated by the Council to serve the home address of the child at the time when an application for admission could have been made at the normal age of admission for the school. Information on school catchment areas is available from <http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/schooladmissions>

3.7 Qualifying School

3.7.1 A qualifying school is defined as a:

- Community, Foundation or Voluntary School;
- Mainstream Academy;
- Free School;
- Community or Foundation Special School;
- Special Academy and Free School;
- University Technical College or University Training School;
- Studio School;
- Non-Maintained Special School;
- Pupil Referral Unit;
- Nursery School Maintained by a Local Authority;
- City Technology College (CTC), City College for the Technology of the Arts (CCTA) or an Academy;
- an Independent School if it is named as the local authority's preferred placement in the pupil's Statement of Special Educational Needs (Statement) or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

3.7.2 In relation to a child with Special Educational Needs (SEN), an independent school (other than a CTC, CCTA or Academy) will be a qualifying school if it is the only school named in the child's Statement or EHCP, or it is the nearest of 2 or more schools named in the statement or EHCP.

3.7.3 In the case of special education provision, it will be the nearest suitable special school with places available that can provide an education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special

educational needs that the child has as specified in his or her Statement or EHCP.

3.7.4 In individual exceptional circumstances, where an alternative form of education has been agreed, the term 'school' will be taken to include such agreed sources of alternative provision.

3.7.5 A school designated by the Council as the appropriate school for a particular pupil (e.g. a permanently excluded pupil, a pupil with a Statement or EHCP or a child in the care of the Council and placed at a particular school) will normally be deemed to be the nearest suitable school for the purposes of this policy.

3.8 Non-Availability of Places at Catchment Area School

3.8.1 If the designated catchment area school is unable to offer a place, free travel assistance is normally provided to the nearest qualifying school at which a place is available. In such cases evidence must be provided by the parent/carer that the school was unable to admit the child. This may require confirmation by the School Admissions Team.

3.9 Statutory Notices for Closures of the London Borough of Hillingdon Schools

3.9.1 Statutory proposals to close a Council maintained school must be published with transitional arrangements for displaced pupils, as required by Department of Education guidance for decision makers. Arrangements for children already attending or expecting to be allocated a place at the school that is the subject of closure will, where necessary, establish the arrangements for transfer and travel assistance of these pupils to an alternative designated catchment area school. These proposals will determine the dates from which transferring children may become eligible for free travel assistance to the alternative school.

3.9.2 In addition, and reflecting the need to be sensitive to the concerns of parents/carers of pupils who were due to join their catchment or nearest school at the school's point of entry, travel assistance may be provided to the alternative designated catchment area school in the event that the Council approves a statutory proposal to close the catchment school.

3.9.3 The Council may exercise its discretion to provide travel assistance for parents/carers of pupils who expressed a preference in the previous school admission round for the next nearest school or proposed alternative designated catchment area school prior to the Council's approval of a statutory proposal to close the catchment school.

3.9.4 Travel Assistance to an alternative school will not be provided to pupils who are already registered at a school that the Council approves for closure, unless it is intended by the Council in its statutory proposals to be provided to implement the closure, as the move will be classified as parental preference.

3.10 Lack of Available Walking Routes

- 3.10.1 When determining whether the child's home is within the statutory distance, there must be an available walking route to the qualifying school that is 'safe'. If the nature of the route is such that the child cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, even when accompanied by an adult, then the Council will deem it 'unsuitable for walking' and therefore not available.
- 3.10.2 In determining what is 'reasonable', the Council will take into account the latest national guidance on this issue from road safety professionals and apply national Road Safety GB standards in making such assessments.

3.11 Individual circumstances as determined by the Council's Disability Panel

- 3.11.1 Assistance with transport will be offered if the Council's Disability Panel decides that this should be provided in recognition of individual exceptional circumstances.

3.12 Children at Boarding or Residential School

- 3.12.1 Where the Council arranges for a child to board at a school, travel assistance will be provided in accordance with the boarding arrangements where the usual distance criteria are also met.
- 3.12.2 Boarding arrangements for residential schools can be one of the following:
- Termly boarding – travel assistance will only be provided at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the half term holiday.
 - 12 day boarding – travel assistance will be provided on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.
 - Weekly boarding - travel assistance will be provided to and from school at the beginning and end of the academic week.
 - 52 week placement – travel assistance will be provided up to a maximum of three return journeys a year.
- 3.12.3 For all boarding arrangements, any additional journeys to those laid out above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.
- 3.12.4 In the interests of the efficient use of resources the Council will, in all cases, encourage the parent/carer to make their own travel arrangements for which appropriate reimbursement will be made.
- 3.12.5 The cost of attending one Statement/EHC Plan review per year at an out of Council area school will be met by the Council by reimbursement of the most economical means of travel assistance available. No other additional

costs (e.g. other members of the family, friends etc.) will be met by the Council.

3.12.6 One parent/carer may be transported with the child to act as a passenger assistant to out of area schools where it results in the most efficient use of the Council's resources.

3.12.7 All additional travel requirements to those detailed above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.

3.13 Children with Special Educational Needs

3.13.1 This section applies to children who are the subject of a Statement of Special Educational Need made under the Education Act 1996 or an Education, Health and Care Plan made under the Children and Families Act 2014.

3.13.2 There is no automatic entitlement to travel assistance for a child who is the subject of a Statement or EHCP. Travel assistance will be given when the child meets the statutory criteria specified in Section 2 or when a specific need can be identified for it. This will usually be determined upon the individual special needs of the pupil, see below.

3.14 Parental Preference

3.14.1 It should be noted that the Council will only consider travel assistance to the nearest suitable school. If by parental preference a more distant school is named in the child's Statement or EHCP, but in the Authority's view the child's needs could be suitably met at a nearer school, transport will be the responsibility of the parent/carer. A statement to this effect will be recorded in the Statement or EHCP accordingly.

3.15 Assessment of Specific Need

3.15.1 A child undergoing formal assessment for Special Education Needs will have their transport needs considered as part of that process. A decision will be based on written evidence from a range of sources, for example, the Educational Psychologist, the parent/carer and the school Special Needs Coordinator (SENCo). Information and advice regarding travel assistance will be made available to the parent/carer during the assessment process as required. This information and advice is available from the Hillingdon Transport Team (HTT).

3.15.2 Long term⁵ severely restricted independent mobility factors will be considered as part of the travel assistance application process. Such factors could include:

⁵ 1 Long term describes something that is likely to last for at least a year or for the rest of the life of the person affected. This can include intermittent or sporadic conditions such as multiple sclerosis

- a physical disability e.g. severe cerebral palsy which may necessitate the daily use of significant mobility aids such as a wheelchair,
- a medical condition resulting in severe persistent pain and/or extreme fatigue, an example of this might be juvenile arthritis,
- a medical condition resulting in serious persistent health and safety risks.

3.15.3 Lack of awareness of common dangers and lack of age appropriate independence skills so the child could be at significant risk when travelling to school will also be considered as part of the application process. Such factors could include:

- severely restricted communication skills. Examples might be profound hearing impairment or severe autism or severe language disorder;
- a sensory impairment resulting in significantly restricted mobility, e.g. a severe visual impairment;
- significant learning disability, e.g. a child with severe learning difficulties who is unable to assess risk and adapt to everyday situations;
- severe difficulties with interpreting complex social situations or being able to cope with unexpected change, e.g. a pupil with Asperger's Syndrome who has very little awareness of personal danger;
- severe behavioural emotional and/or social difficulties in comparison with other children of their age.

3.15.4 Travel assistance may be arranged on a localised pick-up point basis, if assessed as appropriate through the transport application process.

3.15.5 Pupils who attend special schools often take part in integration programmes with mainstream schools. Pupils are expected to attend their local authority recognised catchment area or nearest qualifying school to enable the parent/carer to make their own arrangements to take or collect the child.

3.15.6 If a parent/carer moves home within Hillingdon during the Academic Year, transport will continue to be available to the current school until the end of the Academic Year. The child should be transferred to the nearest appropriate school to the new address from no later than the beginning of the next academic year. However, if the parent/carer wishes their child to remain at the current school then transport will become their responsibility.

- 3.15.7 Arrangements may be made for a child below compulsory school age with SEN to attend a Foundation Stage Support Class (FSSC) or any similar setting offering special needs provision. When making such arrangements the normal eligibility criteria for children of primary school age, including walking distance, will apply. Where the journey exceeds 45 minutes the Council will provide additional travel assistance only in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.15.8 Travel assistance arrangements to attend an FSSC or similar setting are provided on a discretionary basis. Parents/carers are advised not to rely upon the provision of travel assistance to enable attendance at a FSSC or similar setting.
- 3.15.9 Where the transport need has not been assessed at the annual review or as part of the statutory assessment process, it will be necessary for an application form to be made by the child's parent/carer. Information is required on the mobility of the child, any special medical or behavioural conditions and any special equipment required to inform the individual assessment of travel assistance need.

3.16 Annual Review of Travel Assistance

- 3.16.1 Eligibility for travel assistance and the type of provision required will be reviewed on a continuing basis and at least once a year. Any changes will be implemented from the beginning of the next school term, or sooner by mutual agreement.
- 3.16.2 Just as an aim of special education provision is to increase the independence of the pupil, the way that a child travels to school is likely change over time, to reflect their increasing progress and maturity. For this reason, the transport needs of the child will be reviewed regularly and all recipients of travel assistance will be required to re-apply on an annual basis.
- 3.16.3 The annual window for travel assistance applications will be between May 1st and June 30th in any given year for implementation in September of the year of application.

3.17 Pupils with Temporary Medical Problems

- 3.17.1 Travel assistance may be considered where a child lives within the defined walking distance to school relevant to his or her age and is attending the designated or nearest school available but is unable to walk to school because of a medical condition. This is provided for a fixed period dependent upon the medical need identified, for example no more than 6 calendar weeks while the child is unable to walk the route due to a broken leg. The period may be extended on request by the parent/carer if the fixed term is likely to be inadequate because the medical condition persists.

- 3.17.2** It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to produce evidence of the medical condition in all cases, detailing:
- full medical details of the condition, including timescales for recovery;
 - written medical confirmation regarding the child's fitness to return to school;
 - the likely period for which revised travel assistance arrangements may be needed;
 - the type of vehicle needed, where appropriate, for example, where the child is in a full body cast;
 - any manual handling risks.
- 3.17.3** This should be endorsed by the family doctor or in certain circumstances by a medical consultant. The Council reserves the right to require the parent/carer to provide further medical evidence as deemed necessary. Any charges incurred by the parent/carer in providing this evidence will not be reimbursed by the Council.
- 3.17.4** Similarly, if the travel arrangements made for a child, by the Council, are considered not appropriate as a result of an accident, planned surgery or an illness, then a request for revisions to the travel assistance arrangements must be made in writing, giving a minimum of 5 days' notice.
- 3.17.5** All requests should be made to the HTT.
- 3.17.6** All decisions will be based on the facts provided, taking into account the needs of the child, the availability of appropriate travel assistance and any significant increase in costs.
- 3.17.7** Appeals against decisions not to provide additional assistance in these circumstances should be made in writing to be considered by the Council.

3.18 Pupils with a Disability

- 3.18.1** Where a pupil has a disability, under the Equality Act 2010 (Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005) reasonable adjustments will be made, as appropriate, in the application of this policy.

3.19 Parents with a Disability

- 3.19.1** The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people and to eliminate discrimination.
- 3.19.2** The Council may exercise its discretion to provide travel assistance where a child lives within the walking distance to school relevant to his or her age

and circumstances and is attending the designated or nearest school available but where his or her parents are unable to accompany him or her on the walk to school because of a medical condition or disability.

- 3.19.3** The Council will consider the availability of help from immediate and extended family members and from neighbours. The availability of help through a School Travel Plan will be considered as will the use of any disability benefits to help secure attendance. It is expected that the parent/carer will have made every effort to secure other help. The Council may seek confirmation of this from the parent/carer, school or other agencies. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to produce evidence of the medical condition. This is normally endorsed by the family doctor or medical consultant. The Council may ask the parent/carer to provide explicit further medical evidence. If provided, the requirement for travel assistance will be reviewed no less than on a termly basis.
- 3.19.4** All requests should be made to the HTT. Decisions will be based on the facts provided, taking into account the needs of the child, the availability of appropriate travel assistance and any significant increase in costs.
- 3.19.5** An appeal against a decision not to provide additional assistance in these circumstances should be made, in writing, to the Council.

3.20 Cared For Children, Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

- 3.20.1** The Council will exercise its discretion to provide a child with travel assistance to continue to attend their school where the child:
- is temporarily living at a foster placement
 - is within the Council area
 - for a period of up to 12 calendar weeks.
- 3.20.2** Where a request for travel assistance does not meet the above criteria, arrangements for transport will fall to the Social Worker responsible, representing the Council as the corporate parent.
- 3.20.3** In general, where subsequent temporary placements occur after the initial 12 week period, no further travel assistance will be provided, however applications may be considered on the grounds of “individual or extenuating circumstances”.

3.21 Pupils Excluded from School

- 3.21.1** A pupil permanently excluded from a school will be provided with travel assistance to their new school provided it is both the nearest suitable school and is outside statutory walking distance from home. Exceptional arrangements may be made if a permanently excluded pupil attends alternative provision and this may include assistance with part-time

attendance at other educational establishments as required by their particular needs.

- 3.21.2 The transport needs of pupils who attend alternative provision because of a fixed term exclusion from a school or academy will be a matter for the school and the parent/carer.

3.22 Children Admitted to School under the Fair Access Protocol

- 3.22.1 When considering the admission of pupils under the Council's Fair Access Protocol, which operates outside normal admission procedures, the nearest schools to the pupil's home address will be identified to determine which school should be offered. In administering this protocol the Council will consider a group of schools and identify with the pupil, their parent/carer and other relevant agencies the school to be approached. Account will be taken of the travelling distance to each school. Pupils who are placed under the Fair Access Protocol will be considered for transport as if the named school was their nearest suitable (qualifying) school.

3.23 Education Other Than at School

- 3.23.1 Where the Council arranges for a child to receive education other than at school then the location where education is provided will be considered as if it were a school when determining eligibility for travel assistance. In determining reasonableness, the Council will take into account the cost, to the Council, of the proposed travel assistance and the availability of alternative arrangements.
- 3.23.2 Where a parent/carer has decided to educate the child other than at school, no travel assistance will be available from the Council. Where travel assistance is provided, there is an expectation that all children will travel by public transport unless either no public transport is available or the child's needs are such that this would not be appropriate, as decided by a relevant Council Officer. The parent/carer may be required to provide medical or other supporting evidence where there is a request for provision other than by public transport.
- 3.23.3 Where it is not appropriate to use public transport or where none is available then provision will be made by the Council. Where it is more cost effective for the Council, a Personal Transport Budget will be offered to a parent/carer able to make their own travel arrangements. Only where there is no reasonable alternative available will taxis/or minibuses be used for the entire journey.
- 3.23.4 Where a child remains on roll at a mainstream setting and that setting out-sources all or part of the education provision, the setting will be responsible for all transport arrangements for the child's off- site education provision.

3.23.5 The Council will only consider the provision of free travel assistance where a child:

- is of statutory school age and lives within the London Borough of Hillingdon area and lives further from the setting than the walking distance for the child's age or meets entitlement criteria and
- has been placed in the school/setting by the Council and either:
- has been permanently excluded or is at risk of permanent exclusion, or
- is unable to attend the designated setting due to exceptional circumstances, with appropriate supporting evidence having been provided, or
- is dual registered and meets standard eligibility criteria.

3.24 Children in Temporary Residential Circumstances

3.24.1 Where a family is forced to re-locate temporarily to alternative accommodation due to circumstances outside their control:

- The Council is prepared under this policy to consider on its merits an application in respect of a child accommodated under a temporary/emergency arrangement otherwise than where responsibility is accepted by the Council (below), having regard to the usual distance criteria, though this requirement may be waived in the case of a child accommodated in a refuge, whose safety would otherwise be at risk. Any such temporary arrangements made to provide travel assistance will be subject to review as necessary and at least on a termly basis.
- Where school transport becomes necessary on social grounds as a result of the intervention of Children's Services, travel assistance will be provided.

3.24.2 Regular work commitments or domestic difficulties of the parent/carer will not normally be considered. The parent/carer is expected to take responsibility in enabling their child's attendance at school.

3.25 Children below Compulsory School Age

3.25.1 Where a child, aged under 5 years old, is admitted to school under the normal admission arrangements to the school agreed by the Council, a request for travel assistance will be considered as if he or she were of compulsory school age. A child reaches statutory school age at the beginning of the term immediately following his or her fifth birthday. No travel assistance will be provided at lunchtimes or at any time other than

the normal start and end of the school day. Transport between these times will remain a parental responsibility.

- 3.25.2 The Council does not provide free travel assistance to nursery or pre-school settings. Arrangements may be made for a child below statutory school age with SEN to attend a special school nursery or a similar setting offering special needs provision. When making such arrangements the normal eligibility criteria for children of primary school age, including walking distance, will apply. Where the journey exceeds 45 minutes the Council will provide travel assistance only in exceptional circumstances.

3.26 Emergencies and Requests at Short Notice

- 3.26.1 The Council will attempt to make arrangements at short notice when requested. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and the parent/carer of a child who relies upon assistance may need to make their own arrangements at their own expense in the case of an emergency. The Council will not accept responsibility for any arrangements so made by a parent/carer.
- 3.26.2 No travel assistance will be provided, other than at the beginning and end of the normal school day. In the cases of exclusion, illness, if a child has to go home during the course of the school day, or during examination periods, the school or parent/carer is responsible for transport.

3.27 Individual or Extenuating Circumstances

- 3.27.1 Individual consideration will be given to a child or children from vulnerable groups who do not meet the criteria set out above. The parent/carer must submit their application in writing, together with the details of any special exceptional circumstances they wish to be considered to the HTT). Please note individual family work commitments, childcare arrangements or inconvenience to a parent/carer are not normally taken into account when considering eligibility for travel assistance.

4. CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE TRAVEL ASSISTANCE IS NOT PROVIDED

4.1 Parental Preference

- 4.1.1 It should be noted that the Council will only consider travel assistance to the nearest suitable school. If by parental preference a more distant school is named in the child's Statement or EHCP, but in the Authority's view the child's needs could be suitably met at a nearer school, transport will be the responsibility of the parent/carer. A statement to this effect will be recorded in the Statement or EHCP accordingly.
- 4.1.2 When expressing a preference for a school other than the designated catchment area, or nearest school (qualifying school), parents/carers are strongly advised to consider their commitment to providing transport for

the whole duration of a child's attendance at that school and to consider whether their ability to provide or pay for that transport is likely to continue over that period of time.

- 4.1.3 Where a child is withdrawn by a parent/carer from one school and placed in another school, free travel assistance will not be provided unless the child is eligible, under the terms of this policy, from the home address to the new school. Such a transfer of school will be regarded as an expression of parental preference.

4.2 Children Attending a School on the Grounds of Religion or Belief

- 4.2.1 Travel assistance will not be provided by the Council to a parent/carer of a child attending school on the grounds of religion or belief ('denominational grounds') except in one specific circumstance, where a child is from a low-income family, as detailed in Section 2.1.1.

4.3 Outside the Normal Start and End of the School Day

- 4.3.1 No travel assistance will be provided at lunchtimes or at any time other than the normal start and end of the school day. Travel between these times will remain a parental responsibility.

4.4 Sibling, Brother, Sister

- 4.4.1 Assistance given for one child in a family will not create a precedent for any of his or her brothers or sisters or other children living at that address. Each child's case will be considered individually, and separate applications for assistance must be made for each child. If the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy has changed since the older sibling received travel assistance, the younger sibling will be subject to the new policy.

4.5 Change of Address

- 4.5.1 When there is a change of address, a child's transport entitlement will be reviewed under the policy in existence at that time. Travel assistance will not generally be given to maintain a pupil's place at a school if the family moves house to a more distant address from the pupil's school. However, if no place is available at the nearest qualifying school within the statutory walking distance from the new address then assistance would normally be given to the next nearest suitable (qualifying) school, subject to the usual eligibility criteria. Residents moving house are reminded that if they move to an address in another Local Authority, their child will then become subject to the policies of the authority into which they have moved.
- 4.5.2 Where a child who is attending a school in Hillingdon in years 10 and 11 has to move in exceptional circumstances to a new address in Hillingdon they will be provided with travel assistance from their new address to their

current school, as long as they have completed at least one term in year 10 at their current school.

4.5.3 Parents/carers of a pupil with special educational needs, currently receiving transport who move house within Hillingdon should provide at least one month's notice to the HTT and to allow their eligibility to be reassessed. The Council may offer to move the child to a nearer suitable school bearing in mind any special circumstances, for example, examinations or students in their final year. Should this offer be refused the current school may be deemed as a "parental choice" and not meet the criteria of this policy.

4.6 Selective Schools

4.6.1 There is no additional entitlement to travel assistance on the grounds that the school attended is selective. The Council is not obliged to have regard to parents/carers preference for the child to attend a selective school when determining eligibility for travel assistance.

4.7 Single Sex Schools

4.7.1 Travel assistance to single sex schools will not be supported unless the school concerned is the Council recognised catchment school or nearest qualifying school, where the usual transport criteria will apply.

4.7.2 Similarly, if the Council recognised catchment area or closest qualifying school is a single sex establishment, transport will not be provided to enable the child to attend a mixed school.

4.8 Part Time Attendance, Detention, After School Clubs, etc.

4.8.1 Travel assistance will not be provided at a time other than standard school times e.g. home during the day or late after school, including detention, sporting or other after school clubs and societies. Pupils are expected to complete a full school day and fit into the normal timing of transport.

4.8.2 Where a child's day starts or finishes earlier or later the parent/carer would be required to make other transport arrangements outside of the Council provision.

4.9 Other Circumstances

4.9.1 Travel assistance will not generally be provided:

- to/from any address other than the primary home address;
- to enable the child to attend extra-curricular activities or between institutions within the school day. (For journeys of this nature the organising school or institution will be responsible for transport arrangements);

- to attend dental or hospital appointments, or other non-educational appointments;
- in the event of sickness, where the child has to be collected from school (or returned to residential school midweek);
- for parents/carers attending review meetings;
- to attend work experience;
- to attend an induction day at another establishment;
- to accompany a friend home;
- following unacceptable behaviour occurring on transport, which threatens the Health and Safety of staff and/or other pupils.

4.10 Participation in Education or Training Post 16

- 4.10.1 The Education and Skills Act 2008 increased the age at which young people are required to participate in education or training to 18 years of age for pupils who left year 11 in Summer 2014. However, this change does not extend the entitlement for the provision of free travel assistance beyond year 11.
- 4.10.2 Details of travel assistance available under the Council's Post 16 Transport Policy are available on the Council's website <http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/20108/Home-to-school-transport>

5. TRAVEL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

5.1 Mode of Travel Assistance

- 5.1.1 The Council will endeavour to follow established best practice in the provision of the most cost effective and appropriate home to school travel assistance for each entitled child, taking into account their own individual needs. It will make arrangements that enable an eligible child to reach school without such stress, strain, or difficulty that would prevent them from benefiting from the education provided.
- 5.1.2 Travel assistance arrangements will be designed to allow the child to travel in reasonable safety and in reasonable comfort. Priority will be given to travel assistance solutions that help to develop independent travel skills, so as the child grows older, they are better equipped to lead more independent lives. Types of assistance that may be considered include:
- Independent travel training (ITT)
 - Public transport
 - Personal Transport Budget payments to parents/carers

- Funding for the provision of Oyster/travel cards for the parent/carers to enable them to accompany their child (where the child has access to free travel on London Buses)
- Council contracted services
- A wheelchair accessible vehicle, if so required
- A range of more flexible options which explore more creative solutions and promote the independence of the client

5.1.3 Travel assistance will be provided at an appropriate specified place and time. It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that the child is ready and taken to the agreed pick-up point where applicable. No alternative transport will be made on the day and the parent/carer will be responsible for ensuring the child's attendance at school.

5.2 Pick-Up/Set Down Points and Timing

5.2.1 Children will be picked-up and set-down either from home, where their needs require this, or a convenient pick-up/set-down point. The HTT will notify these arrangements to the parent/carer.

5.2.2 Whilst the duty to make travel arrangements does not necessarily require a door to door service, arrangements will not expect a child to walk an unreasonably long distance to catch a public transport, or a public transport journey that ends an unreasonably long distance from the school. A child may be required to walk up to one mile from home to the pick-up point and one mile from the set-down point to home. The actual distances will depend on a range of circumstances, including the age of the child, their individual needs and the nature of the route they are expected to walk to the designated pick-up/set-down point.

5.2.3 The parent/carer must take and collect their child safely to and from the vehicle (unless through prior notice and that due to medical conditions they are unable to do so, which should be indicated at the point of application).

5.2.4 A parent/carer may not vary the agreed pick up/drop off arrangements and neither passenger assistants nor drivers are authorised to agree route variations.

5.3 Route Planning and Route Reviews

5.3.1 The Council regularly reviews transport provision and individual transport routes. A review may result in a change of arrangements to be provided. Wherever possible, notice will be given to parents/carers of any proposed changes to transport provision. Consultation with the parent/carer will not normally take place as part of a route review. This is to enable route reviews to be carried out in a timely and efficient manner and to avoid

raising parental expectations that a preference for a particular form of provision will override the cost-effectiveness or efficiency of the service provided. However, where a child's special educational needs indicate that he/she is particularly sensitive to change; the impact of any proposed change will be considered. This may involve discussion with the school or the parent/carer and school prior to any change to the travel assistance provided.

5.3.2 A parent/carer may receive notification at any time that the type of transport provision for their child's school transport is to be changed as a result of a review. Changes may involve:

- a new pick-up and set-down point;
- a change to journey times;
- a change to the contractor employed;
- the withdrawal or change of a passenger assistant.

5.3.3 Notice will be given of changes wherever possible, but some may need to be made at very short notice, for example as a result of sickness, road closures or the termination of a contract with a vehicle operator.

5.4 Maximum Journey Time

5.4.1 Best practice suggests that the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age might be considered to be 45 minutes; whilst a child of secondary school age might be expected to travel up to 75 minutes each way. However, a child's special educational needs and/or disability might be such that a shorter maximum journey time would be appropriate.

5.4.2 Journey times may exceed these limits for exceptions such as:

- exceptional traffic or weather conditions;
- attendance at a special school;
- attendance at a remote boarding school;
- attendance at a remote school or institution in order to avoid exclusion;
- attendance at a remote school following a move in order to maintain educational continuity or;
- attendance at an alternative school following an exclusion or managed move.

5.5 Provision of Passenger Assistants (PA)

5.5.1 Mainstream Transport

PAs are generally not provided on mainstream transport, the need for exceptional provision, on either a temporary or permanent basis, will be determined by the Council.

5.5.2 Transport for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

A PA is provided if it is considered that the health and safety of the child, driver or anyone else travelling in the vehicle would be at risk if not provided. The need for such provision will be reviewed as part of the annual application process.

5.5.3 PAs are generally only provided where the child has:

- a severe physical condition;
- a medical condition that may require immediate treatment;
- severe behavioural difficulties.

5.5.4 Except in exceptional circumstances, PAs will not be provided for:

- pupils attending mainstream schools;
- hearing impaired pupils;
- where there are fewer than three pupils in a vehicle.

5.5.5 The need for exceptional provision, on either a temporary or permanent basis, will be determined by the Council.

5.6 Passenger Assistants' Role and Responsibilities

5.6.1 PAs are given a range of training, including emergency aid and moving and handling techniques. The level of training is kept under review to ensure that the needs of all children carried can be met.

5.6.2 PAs will have had a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for people working with children before taking up duty. They will display their identification badge at all times when on duty.

5.6.3 PAs monitor the well-being and conduct of pupils and ensure their safety while the journey is in progress. They familiarise themselves with the children and ensure good behaviour during the journey. However, PAs are not assigned for the specific purpose of managing behavior. An acceptable standard of behaviour is expected.

5.6.4 In the event of a medical emergency, the PA will administer emergency aid to the level to which they have been trained by the Council. This will

normally be to make the passenger safe and then request assistance from the emergency services, where necessary. The PA/driver will not administer medication, unless specifically trained and recognised by the Council to carry out the particular procedure required.

- 5.6.5 PAs have a responsibility to report any accidents, incidents, near misses or illnesses that occur in transit, either to the school or to the Council. They will take notes on the pupil's well-being, care for them on site and report back to the Council, who will notify parents and schools, as appropriate.

5.7 Independent Travel Training

- 5.7.1 For some children with SEN increased independence may be demonstrated by a child gradually developing the skills and confidence to travel by public transport, rather than on dedicated transport, or by being able to walk to school. For others it could be that they need less support and supervision.

- 5.7.2 Plans to encourage independent travel should be put in place by the school and parents/carers, working in partnership to mutually agreed targets. Progress will be evidenced at each subsequent Annual Review. This step is regarded as a positive achievement towards the child's progress in becoming a more independent traveller. A secondary aged child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs who is eligible for travel assistance because of their special needs may also receive support for independence and mobility training as part of their school curriculum, if this is identified as a need. The way that the child travels to and from school should be used to help develop and consolidate new skills.

5.8 Personal Transport Budgets

- 5.8.1 A personal transport budget is a sum of money provided to parents or carers of children with special educational needs who are eligible for travel assistance. Personal transport budgets enable families to arrange their child's home-to-school travel arrangements in a way that suits their circumstances best. The budget allows families to make flexible arrangements, monitor the quality of their child's transport directly and, if they choose, work with other families to achieve the best possible travel arrangements for their child(ren).

- 5.8.2 Details of the scheme are available on the following link
<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/28909/Personal-transport-budgets>

5.9 Sustainable Travel

- 5.9.1 The Council has legal duties, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to promote sustainable travel for children, these duties include:

- assessment of travel and transport needs
- audit of sustainable travel and transport infrastructure that may be used when travelling to or from school
- strategy to develop sustainable travel and transport infrastructure
- promotion of sustainable travel

5.10 Appeals against Suitability of Transport

- 5.10.1** If parents/carers disagree with the Council's assessment of the travel assistance that it deems is necessary for their child, including a decision that the child does not qualify for or need any help, they can appeal against that decision in writing to explain why they feel that the decision is incorrect based on the premise of terms of entitlement, distance measurement, route safety and/or consideration of exceptional circumstances.
- 5.10.2** The appeal documentation including any medical or written reports to support the appeal made by parents/carers must be submitted within 10 working days from the date on the original transport decision being made by Hillingdon Council. Each case will be given careful consideration and determined by the SEN Team Manager. In the first instance parents/carers should write to Hillingdon's Transport Officer in the case of an appeal.
- 5.10.3** An independent and impartial 2nd stage review will be determined by Hillingdon's Deputy Leader/Lead Member for Children and Families. Further information on this final step is available from the Transport Officer.

5.11 Monitoring of Transport Provision

- 5.11.1** The Council will undertake regular checks to ensure compliance with service standards, these will include:
- spot checks on vehicles and licences;
 - checks to ensure all drivers and passenger assistants are authorised and carry identification;
 - undertake duties in accordance with service standards and requirements;
 - checks to ensure that contracted routes are operated in accordance with the agreed timetable and specific terms and conditions of the contract.

5.12 Pupil Behaviour

- 5.12.1 The Council may withdraw the provision of travel assistance or employ other sanctions, as it considers appropriate, in the case of any child whose behaviour during the journey to or from school is not of an acceptable standard. In addition, schools can employ a number of sanctions ranging from detention to exclusion in order to deal with persistent misbehaviour on school transport.
- 5.12.2 Transport operators will advise the Council where the behaviour of a child breaches the Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport, and in turn the parent/carer and school will be notified. Where a criminal act is suspected the police will be notified.

5.13 When Home to School Travel Assistance Does Not Operate

- 5.13.1 There will be occasions when a vehicle does not operate; this may be because of bad weather including flooding or icy conditions where it is not possible for the vehicle to travel safely. In these circumstances a parent/carer may decide to make alternative arrangements to transport their child to school. This will be entirely at the parent's discretion and own cost. The parent/carer will also be responsible for the return journey should conditions not have improved sufficiently for travel assistance to be provided safely.
- 5.13.2 In all circumstances where a child has been taken to school by school transport, arrangements will be made to return the child home or to a place of safety.

6. TRAVEL ASSISTANCE APPLICATIONS AND DETERMINATIONS

6.1 Children Attending Mainstream Education

- 6.1.1 Transport for London (TfL) provides free bus travel for all children and young people under the age of 18 and this is the expected entitlement for the majority of children and young people within Hillingdon. However where this is not provided it may be possible to provide funding for the provision of Oyster/travel cards to enable access to free travel on London buses provided by TfL.
- 6.1.2 In the London Borough of Hillingdon it is likely that only a very small proportion of children attending mainstream education would qualify for travel assistance under this policy. Exceptions may be when, for example, there is the lack of an available safe walking route.

6.2 Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan

- 6.2.1 Transport assistance is typically only provided on the basis of a formal application submitted by or on behalf of the parent/carer.
- 6.2.2 The type of assistance provided will be based on the assessment of individual needs; the Council will always seek to provide the most appropriate, cost effective provision.
- 6.2.3 Details of how to apply are available on the Council's web-site <http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/20108/home-to-school-transport> or by contacting the HTT.

6.3 Measurement of the Walking Route

- 6.3.1 The distance between home and school is measured, using Google Maps, from the pupil's home address to the school address, by way of the shortest available walking route.

6.4 Assessment of the "Available" Walking Route

- 6.4.1 The Council recognises that some routes to school may be "unavailable". A route is considered by the Council to be unavailable when a child could not be expected to walk to school, accompanied as necessary by an appropriate adult, in reasonable safety.
- 6.4.2 Where a child attends the designated or nearest available qualifying school and the walking route is unavailable and cannot be sufficiently improved, travel assistance will be provided unless there is an alternative available walking route under the walking distance defined in Section 2.1. It should be noted that measurement and assessment of a route does not require the authority to assess the most direct or convenient route – any route that is available within the maximum distance means travel assistance will not be provided.
- 6.4.3 In assessing the comparative safety of a route, the Council will conduct an assessment of the risks a child might encounter along the prescribed route using the latest national guidelines published by Road Safety GB and taking account of the latest Department for Education guidance. Such assessments will feed into the Council's duty relating to sustainable school travel, and may inform the Council's plans to upgrade the highway infrastructure, support sustainable school travel or feed into school travel plans.

6.5 Changes in Circumstances

- 6.5.1 If there is a significant change in circumstances, such as a change in school or home address, a change in the parent's/carer's circumstances, or a change in the child's needs an immediate review of travel assistance

entitlement/provision may be required. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to promptly notify the Council of any change in circumstances that may affect the provision of travel assistance.

- 6.5.2 Where travel assistance is provided for temporary medical needs, a review date, based on medical evidence, will be set when the travel assistance is agreed. Where this is not possible, all arrangements will be reviewed in relation to the specific circumstances.

6.6 Correcting Errors/Withdrawal of Transport

- 6.6.1 If travel assistance has been provided as a consequence of an error of the Council, provision will not be withdrawn with less than 12 weeks' notice.
- 6.6.2 Where an improvement in the accuracy of methods for assessing eligibility identifies that assistance has been provided for a non-eligible child, provision will not be withdrawn with less than 12 weeks' notice. This may occur where the distance from home to school is re-measured and found to be under the relevant walking distance, or a suitable, available walking route has now been identified. In this case, the child will have benefited from free transport and would be expected to be able to walk to school and not be obliged to transfer to another school.
- 6.6.3 Where an improvement to a route is made and results in the route becoming available for a child to walk, accompanied as necessary by an adult, provision will not be withdrawn with less than 12 weeks' notice.
- 6.6.4 If travel assistance has been provided as a consequence of information provided by the parent, which was false or misleading and where correct and accurate information would have resulted in a refusal of a request for travel assistance, provision may be withdrawn immediately and will normally be withdrawn with no more than four calendar weeks' notice. Should the Council believe that information provided was deliberately false or misleading; the costs of providing the transport may be sought from the parent/carer.

7. REVIEW OF DECISIONS, APPEALS PROCESS & COMPLAINTS

7.1 Decisions, Review of Decisions and Appeals Process

- 7.1.1 If parents/carers disagree with the Council's assessment of the travel assistance that it deems is necessary for their child, including a decision that the child does not qualify for or need any help, they can appeal against that decision in writing to explain why they feel that the decision is incorrect based on the premise of terms of entitlement, distance measurement, route safety and/or consideration of exceptional circumstances.

- 7.1.2 The appeal documentation including any medical or written reports to support the appeal made by parents/carers must be submitted within 10 working days from the date on the original transport decision being made by Hillingdon Council. Each case will be given careful consideration and determined by the SEN Team Manager. In the first instance parents/carers should write to Hillingdon's Transport Officer in the case of an appeal.
- 7.1.3 It is anticipated that the majority of appeals will be resolved at this stage. If the appeal is unsuccessful the parent will receive a copy of the appeal form with the reasons given for the decision.
- 7.1.4 An independent and impartial 2nd stage review will be determined by Hillingdon's Deputy Leader/Lead Member for Children and Families. Further information on this final step is available from the Transport Officer.
- 7.1.5 The Panel will consider the information provided within the completed School Transport Appeals Form and any supplementary information provided by the parent/carer.
- 7.1.6 Where the pupil in question holds a Statement or EHC Plan, it may be that a disagreement about travel assistance is part of a wider question of school provision and placement. In such an instance, it may be necessary for the matter to be considered by a Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. Although this body does not hear appeals specifically about transport, it may consider it as part of a wider appeal.
- 7.1.7 The Appeals Process detailed above does not prevent the parent/carer raising a school transport related issue with a local Councillor or any other person.
- 7.1.8 Where a parent/carer feels that an appeal has not been conducted in a fair manner, he or she may pursue a complaint using the Council's complaints procedure.

7.2 Complaints/Queries

- 7.2.1 If a parent/carer has a query or is dissatisfied by any aspect with regard to the determination of eligibility/entitlement for travel assistance; this should initially be brought to the attention of the HTT (Applications and Determinations).
- 7.2.2 Queries/complaints relating to journey planning, standard/condition of vehicles, drivers, passenger assistants and any other issues relating to the journey to/from school should initially be brought to the attention of the HTT (Transport Delivery).

- 7.2.3 If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction it may be escalated via the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure
<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints>

7.3 Contact Details

7.3.1 Hillingdon Transport Team (Applications and Determinations)

2 South 01
Civic Centre
Uxbridge UB8 1UW
Telephone: (01895) 556759

7.3.2 Hillingdon Transport Team (Transport Delivery)

Harlington Road Depot
128 Harlington Road
Middlesex
UB8 3EU
Telephone: (01895) 250008

8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Academic Year, School Year

The academic year is deemed to start on 1st September in any given year and to end on 31st August in the following calendar year. In the exceptional case of a school whose academic year begins in August, the Council will consider whether it should take the date when that school's academic year starts as being the start of the academic year for a child or student attending that school.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team

Most children with special educational needs will get all the help that they need through SEN Support, as schools have an allowance in their budgets to meet their needs. However, for a very small number of children, a statutory assessment may be required. A statutory assessment is when the Local Authority looks carefully at a child's learning difficulties. Once the Local Authority has received all the information and looked at it, a Referrals Panel will decide whether to assess the child to see if he/she needs an Education, Health and Care Plan. In Hillingdon this is managed by the SEN Team.

Address, Home Address

For the purposes of home to school travel assistance the home address will be deemed to be where the child predominantly resides, normally with someone who holds parental responsibility. Proof of residence may be requested to confirm that a child and the child's family are resident at a specified address. The following are examples of items that may suffice as proof:

- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- registration on the electoral roll
- utility bills
- bank statements
- driving licence
- mortgage or tenancy account details

The list of documents above is not exhaustive and the Council may ask for permission to gain access to other local authority information, for example Council Tax or Housing Benefit records. If doubt exists, the Council may also require a parent/carer to complete a formal statement to certify the home address. This would be discussed at the appropriate time.

Alternative provision

For some children, an education outside of school can be the most appropriate option. When this is arranged by Local Authorities, schools or a group of schools, it is called alternative provision. It can range from pupil referral units (PRUs) and further education colleges to voluntary or private-sector projects.

Boarding/Residential Schools

Boarding/Residential schools are those that provide overnight accommodation arranged or provided by the school, at the school or elsewhere.

Cared for Children (Looked After Children) and Children who were previously Cared for

A 'cared for child' is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that local authority (as defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989).

Children previously 'cared for' are children who were 'cared for' as defined above, but immediately after being 'cared for' became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Catchment Area School

A geographical area from which children are given priority for admission to the particular school.

Child, Children

A young person of compulsory school age (from 5 years to 16 years old).

Compulsory (Statutory) School Age

Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. In compliance with legal requirements, children may start school in the reception class in the September following their 4th birthday. Parents/carers can request that the date their child is admitted to the primary school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches statutory school age in that school year. To help younger children adjust to school, schools may phase full-time admission, admitting these children on a part-time basis. Arrangements are decided at school level.

Statutory school age ceases on the last Friday in June in the school year when the young person reaches the age of 16. No account is taken of the National Curriculum Year in which a pupil is being educated when determining the year in which compulsory school ages ceases.

The Education and Skills Act 2008 raised the age at which young people are required to participate in education or training to 18 years of age. This does not necessarily mean they will have to stay on at school after Year 11 as they will have a choice about how they want to participate post-16, which could be through full-time education, such as school or college; work-based learning, such as an Apprenticeship; or part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

Council (Authority, Local Authority)

This is the London Borough of Hillingdon Council. Decisions of the Council are carried out in the name of the Authority by its officers.

Disability

From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005. However, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply. The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled people and prevent disability discrimination by ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the needs of all individuals. Under the Act, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

Dual Registration

The law provides for pupils to be registered at two separate schools in cases where a child has no fixed abode for the reason that a parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require travel from place to place.

Parent/Carer or Guardian

In this Policy, the parent will be taken to be the person with whom the child or student predominantly resides. This can include a person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility or care of the child or student. If the person is not the birth parent or adoptive parent, then evidence may be sought to ascertain that the legal basis of the relationship. In this policy the terms parent or parents are taken to include guardian or guardians.

Publicly Funded Schools

Maintained schools are funded by central government via the local authority and do not charge fees to students. The categories of maintained school are: community, community special, foundation (including trust), foundation special (including trust), voluntary aided and voluntary controlled. There are also maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units.

Academies and free schools are publicly funded independent schools. Some academies, generally those set up to replace underperforming schools, will have a sponsor. Sponsors come from a wide range of backgrounds including successful schools, businesses, universities, charities and faith bodies. Academies receive their funding directly from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) rather than from local authorities.

The Funding Agreement between the establishment and the Secretary of State provides the framework within which Academies, Free Schools, UTCs and Studio Schools operate.

Private Schools

Private schools may be either non-maintained or independent, according to their foundation and legal status and receive their funding either direct from parents, from charitable trusts or from places purchased by local authorities. Generally, although not exclusively, an independent school is usually one run privately for profit whereas a 'non-maintained' school is run 'not for profit' usually by a charitable body.

Special School

Schools that provide education for children and young people with complex or specific needs which generally cannot be fully met in a mainstream setting.

Studio Schools

Studio Schools cater for 14 to 19-year-olds, delivering project-based, practical learning alongside mainstream academic study. They are small schools - typically with around 300 pupils - delivering mainstream qualifications through project based learning. Students work with local employers and a personal coach, and follow a curriculum designed to give them the skills and qualifications they need in work or to continue in education.

University Technical Colleges (UTCs)

UTCs are Technical Academies for 14-19-year-olds. They offer technical courses and work-related learning, combined with academic studies. Each UTC is sponsored by a university and industry partner and responds to local skills needs. They provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to progress at 19 into higher or further education, an apprenticeship or employment.