

London Borough of Ealing
Independent Travel Policy
for Children & Young People up
to 16 Years of Age

June 2018

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Section 1: Introduction

The London Borough of Ealing is committed to ensuring that every child, young person and family in Ealing leads independent, healthy lives, feeling safe and secure and achieving their potential.

We want to support all children and young people, including those with complex needs, to be as ambitious as possible throughout their lives including in preparation for adulthood, this means preparing them for:

- **Traveling independently** - being able to go where they want when they want
- **Higher education and/or employment** – setting and pursuing goals for their future, including exploring different employment options and further education
- **Independent living** – this means young people having choice, control and freedom over their lives and the support they have (including their accommodation and living arrangements)
- **Participating in society** – including having friends and supportive relationships and contributing to their local community
- **Being healthy** – being as healthy as possible in adult life

This document sets out the policy of the London Borough of Ealing (“Ealing Council”) in relation to travel assistance for children and young persons of compulsory school age. It also explains how you may apply, how decisions are made and how you may appeal against decisions that you are unhappy with.

If Ealing Council agrees to assist you in taking your child or young person to school, assistance will be provided in a safe manner taking account of the child or young person’s specific needs and the best use of the Council’s resources.

The statutory Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance published in 2014 confirms that the free transport offer by Transport for London for children under 16 is an acceptable form of travel assistance, if the needs of children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) have been taken into account. Ealing Council expects that this travel assistance offer is sufficient to meet the travel requirements of most children and young people of compulsory school age who live in the Borough of Ealing.

Over 60% of children in Ealing who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are not in receipt of travel assistance support from the Council and either travel independently or the family make their own arrangements to and from their place of education.

Ealing Council recognises that travelling to school independently is a valuable experience for young people as they grow up. To do this, many young people with special needs may need extra training to help them learn the skills required for greater independence.

Ealing Council will provide access to a bespoke independent travel training programme to work with children and young people with SEND who have been identified as able to benefit from travel training.

For eligible families, there is also the option to use a personal independence budget (PIB) to take their child to school. Families use the budget to make their own arrangements which might not be possible without financial support. Arrangements could include: using the family car, organising a taxi, paying a carer to support a child or young person with their travel to school, or combining the Council's contribution with family finances to provide bespoke travel solutions which fit around wider family commitments.

Nearly 100 families are benefiting from using a personal independence budget to make their own travel arrangements, using the financial contribution from the Council to put in place bespoke arrangements that fit around other family commitments.

This policy has been developed with full regard to the Department for Education's Guidance on home to school travel and transport.

General Principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

Parental and Council responsibilities

You are responsible for ensuring that your child attends school (detailed in appendix A). However, to support this, Ealing Council will provide assistance with travel in certain circumstances.

If assistance is provided, it remains your responsibility to ensure the child attends school.

Independence and wellbeing

A key aspiration and requirement of Ealing Council is to provide the necessary support for children with SEND.

Our commitment is to prepare each child for adulthood through the development and promotion of individual independence and facilitating opportunities for social inclusion as well as looking after the physical wellbeing of all children.

Travel assistance makes an important contribution to this commitment.

Sustainability

Ealing Council will favour environmentally sustainable forms of travel, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

The council will also promote those options to make the most effective use of public resources.

Who will be considered for travel assistance?

Pupils aged 0 – 5 (Early Years)

The legal duty to provide home to school travel assistance applies only to

children of compulsory school age (5-16) who need to travel to receive full time education or training.

Ealing Council will only consider providing assistance for children below compulsory school age (5) if all reasonable options to facilitate attendance at the child's place of education have been exhausted and/or other factors exist which make this an unreasonable expectation of the family.

Assistance will only be provided to those children funded as "Children in Need" through the Early Years Placement Panel and living over 2 miles from the Children's Centre they are attending.

Each request for assistance will be considered on its own individual merits. Applications should be made using the Councils Travel Assistance application form.

Pupils aged 5 -16

The duty to provide travel assistance, where necessary, only applies in law, to children and young people of statutory school age (aged 5 to 16).

Pupils aged 16 and over

Post 16 SEN travel assistance is discretionary and subject to assessment. There is a separate policy which details who may be eligible for assistance, how to apply, and what form of travel assistance may be offered.

You can access the policy via the Ealing Council Local Offer:

<https://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk>

Section 2: Is my child eligible for travel assistance?

Each application will be assessed on its own merit, reviewing the specific individual needs of your child against this policy. It is therefore important that families provide all the information and evidence requested during the application process.

When making a decision about your child's eligibility to travel assistance the Council will ask the following questions which are explained more fully in the sections that follow:

1. Does your child attend their nearest 'Qualifying School'?
2. What is the walking distance from the child's home to school?
3. Does your child have any special educational needs or disabilities, which limit their mobility or ability to use public transport?
4. Is the child from a low income family?
5. Are there other exceptional circumstances relating to your child and family that need to be taken into consideration?

Question 1 – Does your child attend their nearest 'Qualifying School'?

What are qualifying schools?

- community, foundation or voluntary schools;
- community or foundation special schools;
- non-maintained special schools;
- pupil referral units;
- maintained nursery schools; or
- academies including free schools, city technology colleges (CTC), city colleges for the technology of the arts (CCTA) and university technical colleges (UTC)

The 'nearest qualifying school' means the nearest school with places available that provides the appropriate education for the age and ability of your child taking into account any special educational needs that your child may have.

Admissions and travel assistance are separate matters and acceptance at a school does not necessarily entitle a child or young person to travel assistance.

For non-SEND children, you are free to name any school you wish during the admission process, the child will only be eligible for free transport where the school selected is the nearest appropriate to the home address and all of the eligibility criteria are met.

Any issue about whether there is a nearer suitable school which the child or young person could attend will normally be determined by reference to the availability of that school during the normal admissions round.

For children or young people with SEND the nearest appropriate 'qualifying school' will be named on their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

If, because of preferences a pupil with SEND secures a place in a school which is further away from the home address than the school identified in the EHCP, then there is no obligation for the Council to provide travel assistance to the more distant school or to a chosen school that falls outside the Council's boundaries.

Summary:

- **If a child or young person does not attend their nearest qualifying school, the Council will not be obliged to offer any form of travel assistance**

Question 2 – What is the walking distance from your child's home to school?

The 'statutory walking distance' criteria is defined in the 2014 statutory Home to School Guidance, published by the DfE as:

- Over 2 miles if the child is aged between 5 and 8 years old, or
- Over 3 miles if the child is 8 years old or older

Using the Council's GIS mapping system, we will measure the shortest walking route which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety when calculating the walking distance.

If your child lives further from school than the statutory walking distance, the Council is obliged to offer assistance with travel. Where a child is able to use public transport, it is expected travel assistance provision will take the form of a Transport for London (TfL) Zip Oyster Card (See section 6: Forms of Travel Assistance Offered).

Consideration of walking Distance for Children with special educational needs and disabilities

In some circumstances a child or young person with SEND may not meet the distance criteria but are unable to walk to school because of their needs. Where this is identified through the assessment process then travel assistance will be offered.

The form of travel assistance offered will be influenced by the needs of the child determined through the assessment process, the distance between the home and school, and the transport routes available.

Summary:

- **Children who live within the 'statutory walking distance' will not receive Council travel assistance, except where they have a special educational need or disability which significantly affects their mobility,**

or there are circumstances presented that require support from the Council

- In most cases, travel assistance for those who live outside the 'statutory walking distance' but who do not have a special educational need or disability will take the form of a Transport for London Zip Oyster Card (See Forms of Travel Assistance below)
- For children with a special educational need or disability, travel assistance will be offered based on an assessment of the individual's mobility, but the distance from home to school may influence the type of travel assistance offered

Question 3 - Does your child have any special educational needs or disabilities, which limit their mobility or ability to use public transport?

You have a legal responsibility to ensure that your children attend school regularly, regardless of the child's special educational needs or disabilities. Wherever possible, the council expects you to plan arrangements for your child to attend school in the same way as parents and carers of pupils without an EHCP or SEN statement, as this is important in developing the child's independence, social and life skills.

Most Ealing children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or SEN statement do not require specialised travel assistance.

Travel assistance for children with an EHCP or SEN statement will be offered based on the needs of the child. In exceptional circumstances children who do not have an EHCP but have medical needs may also be eligible for transport, this is explained further in question 5.

How is eligibility assessed and how are forms of travel assistance chosen?

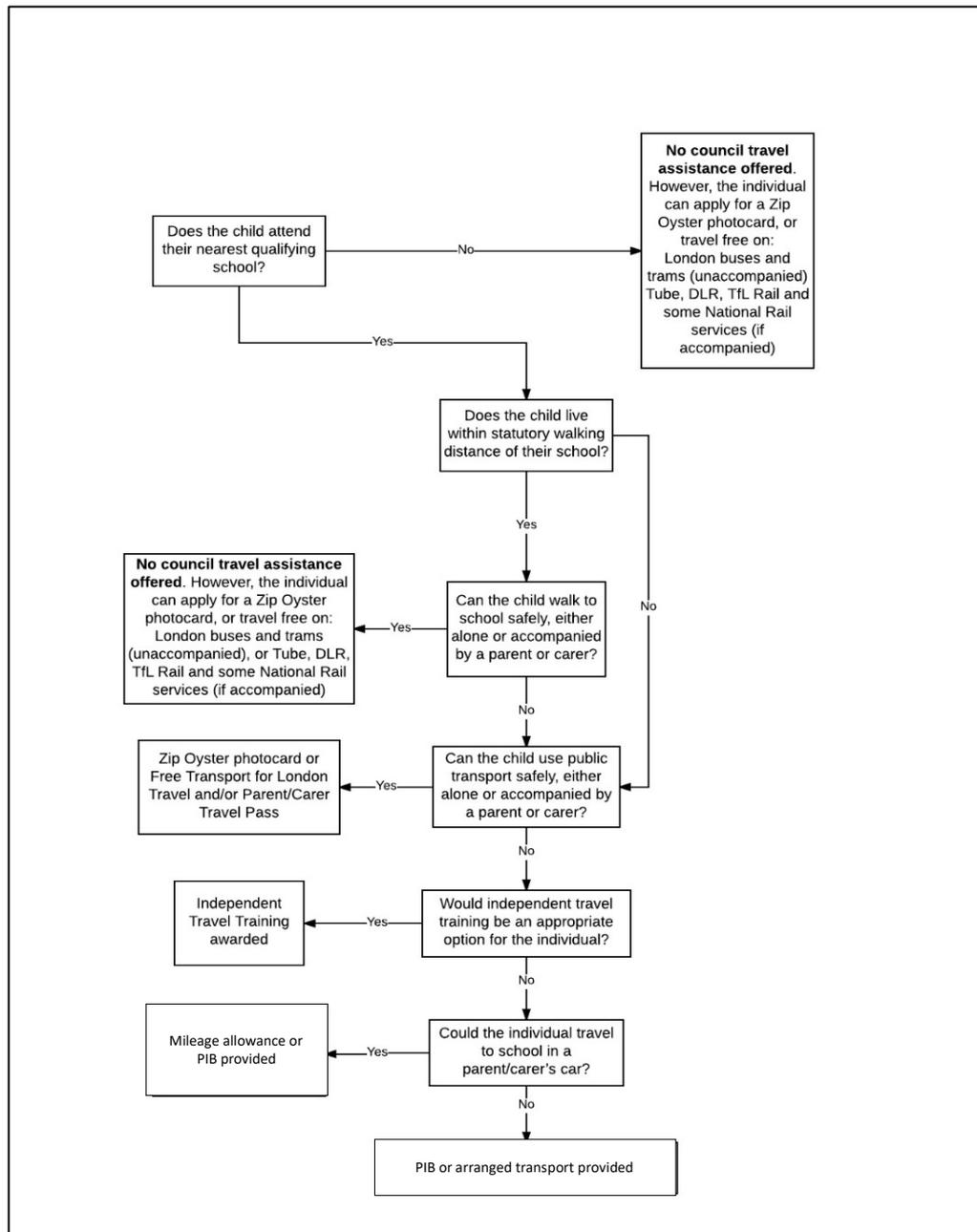
The Ealing Council Travel Independence Hub will assess whether your child is eligible for travel assistance in accordance with this policy. If your child is deemed eligible for some form of travel assistance, the Council will decide which form is most suitable. The decision will be based on careful consideration of the following:

- whether your child would have considerable difficulty in walking or using public transport (accompanied as necessary) due to their special educational needs or disability
- whether your child has a physical or medical disability that rules out the use of free public transport, or suitable public transport is not conveniently available – for example wheelchair users, students who require specialist seating, harnesses, head restraints or other specialist facilities
- whether your child has emotional/behavioural difficulties that severely affect their ability to use free public transport or access alternative travel options in the community.
- the distance and complexity of the journey to and from school, and the public transport routes potentially available

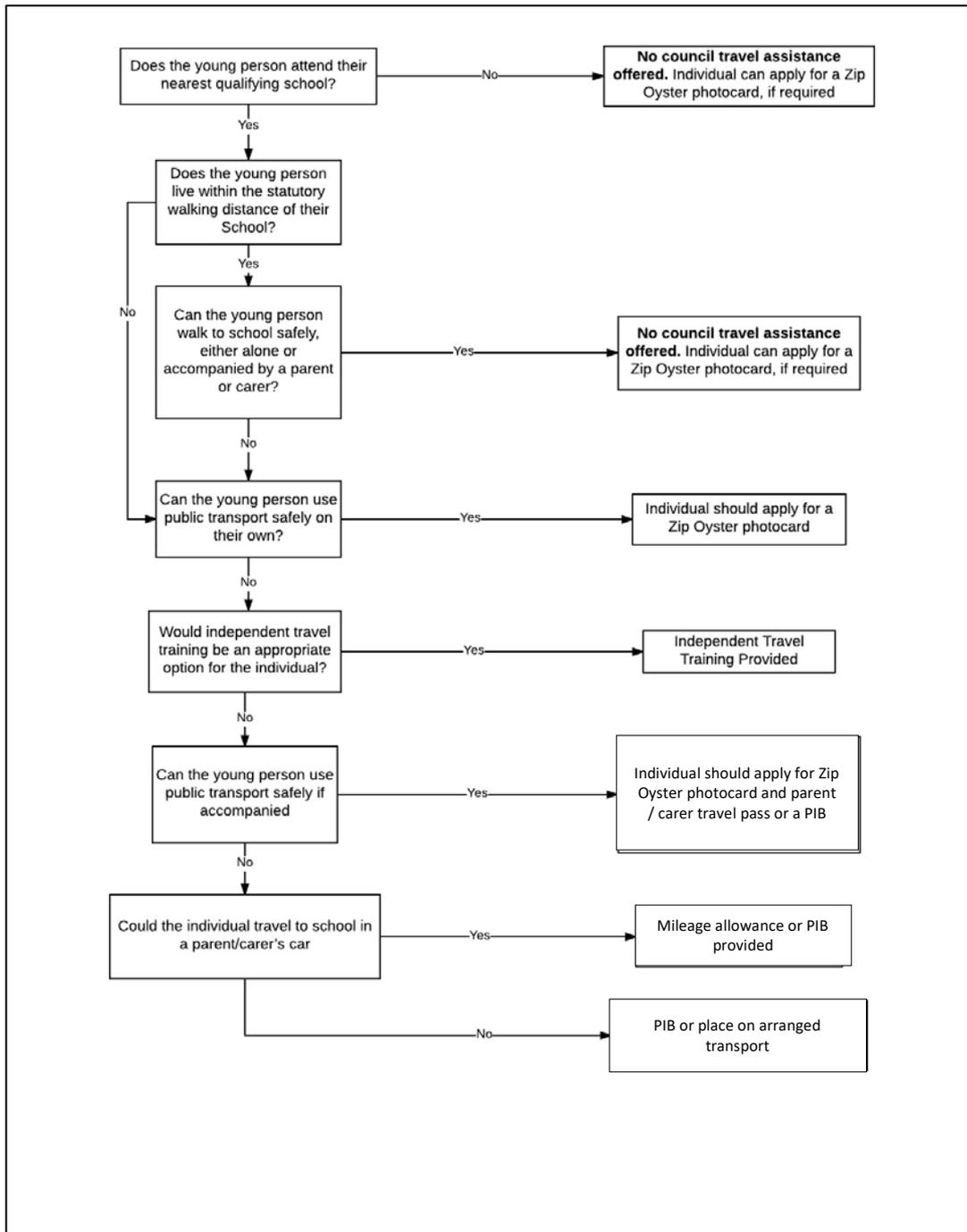
- whether your child would be vulnerable and at risk of danger to themselves or the general public if they use public or other transport (accompanied as necessary)
- whether your child would be able to travel independently to school if suitably travel trained and supported

Ealing Council will then decide which form of travel assistance to offer and will reflect the considerations previously mentioned which are illustrated in the following 'Decision-Making Flowchart'.

Decision Matrix for SEN Travel Assistance Applications for Primary School Aged Children



Decision Matrix for SEN Travel Assistance Applications for Secondary School Aged Children



Other considerations: residential schools

For entitled children aged 5 - 16 with special educational needs and disabilities who attend residential schools, their travel assistance offer will reflect their type of placement.

Travel Assistance offers will be as follows:

- **Termly boarding** - Travel assistance will only be provided at the beginning and end of each term and the beginning and end of each half term and at other official school closures
- **Weekly boarding** – Travel assistance will be provided to and from school at the beginning and end of the academic week and at other official school closures
- If your child's placement is not one of the above then this will be assessed on a case by case basis as an exception to policy.

If your child attends a residential school, it is expected that they will travel either by public transport (accompanied as necessary) or in your vehicle. Ealing Council may offer you a personal independence budget to cover any associated costs. In exceptional cases specialist transport may be considered.

Summary:

- **you have a legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school regularly, regardless of the child's SEND**
- **travel assistance for children with an EHCP or SEN Statement will be offered based on the needs of the child**
- **if your child is deemed eligible for some form of travel assistance, the Council will decide which form is most suitable based on the following:**
 - **child's ability to walking and/or use public transport (accompanied as necessary)**
 - **any physical or medical disability that rules out the use of free public transport**
 - **if your child has any emotional/behavioural difficulties that severely affect their ability to use free public transport or access alternative travel options in the community.**
 - **the distance and complexity of the journey to and from school**
 - **whether your child would be able to travel independently to school if suitably travel trained and supported**

Question 4 - Is the child from a low-income family?

Families with a low-income background are assessed differently. Your child will be assessed under low income criteria if they are entitled to receive free school meals or you are in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- income Support
- income based Job Seekers Allowance

- income based Employment and Support Allowance
- support from NASS (National Asylum Support Service) under part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- pension credit guarantee credit
- child tax credit - if your income is below £16,190
- working tax credit run-on (which is paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for working tax credit)
- universal credit

If identified as low income your child must meet the following criteria based on distance and journey time from home:

- the child attends one of the three nearest maintained schools or academies between 2 miles and 6 miles from their home or the child attends the nearest maintained school or academy on the grounds of their religion** or belief*** between 2 miles and 15 miles from their home
- Complete journey by bus exceeds 45 minutes for a primary age child (each way)
- Complete journey by bus exceeds 75 minutes for a secondary age child (each way)

**Religion – based on the nearest qualifying suitable school and up to a maximum of 15 miles from the child’s home

***Belief – based on case law, examples of beliefs that are not included are: a wish to attend a particular category of school e.g. foundation or grammar; preference for a particular type of management or governance which does not affect curricula or teaching at the school; a belief that a child should be educated privately; a wish that a child must be taught a particular language; objection to having to wear a uniform, a wish for a single sex or co-educational education, where this is not based on the religious views

Summary:

- **Your child will be assessed under low income criteria if they are entitled to receive free school meals or you are in receipt of specific benefits**
- **If identified as low income the following criteria will be used:**
 - **Your child attends one of the three nearest maintained schools or academies between 2 miles and 6 miles from home or**
 - **Your child attends the nearest maintained school or academy, for which on the grounds of their religion** or belief*** between 2 miles and 15 miles from their home**

Question 5 – Are there other circumstances relating to your child and family that need to be taken into consideration?

Each application is assessed based on the individual circumstances presented to the Council. In exceptional circumstances, examples of

which are listed below, the Council may provide transport even when other eligibility criteria are not met:

Temporary medical conditions

We will consider an application for travel assistance for your child if they have a temporary medical need, even if you live within the statutory walking distance.

You will need to provide written evidence from an appropriate medical practitioner confirming that your child has specialist transport requirements which cannot be met by public transport (accompanied or unaccompanied) or a vehicle available for use by the family.

Any assistance offered will be reviewed at regular intervals, and when your child's medical need no longer requires the council support, then travel assistance arrangements will stop. We will expect you to have exhausted all other travel options before applying for travel assistance.

Children with disabled parents

If you have a disability that prevents you from walking with your child to school, the local authority may provide travel assistance to support your child even if they live within the statutory walking distance. However, if you are in receipt of transport assistance as part of your disability living allowance (DLA) then we will expect this to be adequate provision. In exceptional circumstances assistance may be offered.

SEND Children in Care

Travel support may be available for children in care, to ensure their care arrangements are supported by appropriate home to school travel arrangements. The child's care plan sets out how a child will be cared for and how their needs will be met, this includes home to school travel arrangements. The care plan is agreed at the child's statutory child in care review, which is chaired by an independent reviewing manager.

Parent / Carer work arrangements are not regarded as an exceptional circumstance.

Parent / carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school (responsibilities are outlined in appendix A). This may include making or assisting with travel arrangements to and from school and/or accompanying your child.

If your work arrangements conflict with your child's travel to and from school, this will not normally be considered as an exceptional circumstance. Parent / carers who work are advised to:

- Look for breakfast or after school clubs so drop off and pick up times fit in with working hours
- Use alternative care options available, such as a child minder or personal assistant

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

Summary:

The Council may consider an application for travel assistance for your child if:

- they have a temporary medical need, even if you live within the statutory walking distance
- you have a disability that prevents you from walking with your child to school
- they are a child in care (this will be detailed in the child's care plan)
- your work arrangements will not normally be considered as an exceptional circumstance. You have a statutory right to flexible working hours, find out more at <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working>

Section 3: Assessing Your Application

Application Assessment

The Travel Independence Hub will assess your application. The team aims to let you know the outcome of their assessment within 4 weeks of the date they receive your application. In circumstances where additional information is required from other professionals then the assessment process may exceed 4 weeks.

If your application is successful, then consideration will then be given as to what type of travel assistance will be offered.

Travel assistance will reflect your child's needs and circumstances and will be selected from the range of options available. Factors that will influence what travel assistance will be offered include:

- the needs of the child / young person and ability to complete travel training both at the time of application and in the future (e.g. the assessor and family might decide a child is too young, but agree that it is a possibility in the future and to revisit in a few years)
- the distance from home to school
- public transport route
- whether there is already transport going to the school
- the most cost-effective mode of travel assistance

Travel Assistance Provision Exclusions

The purpose of travel assistance is to support children accessing their education for the start and end of the standard school day. Travel assistance will not be available for any of the following: *

- hospital, medical, or dental appointments;
- children taken ill during the school day;
- schools where parent/carers are making their own arrangements;
- travel to and from after-school clubs and other extra-curricular activities;
- schools which are not the nearest school able to meet the needs of the pupil.
- travel to and from work experience

* unless there are exceptional reasons for doing so

In addition to the above, we will not be able to accommodate any preference in terms of collection/drop off times.

Travel assistance will be planned using the most efficient route available to maximise the use of resources available to Ealing Council whilst ensuring journey times are not longer than necessary for any of the children it provides support for.

Multiple Home Addresses

When assessing your application, Ealing Council will use your child's 'main residence' for assessment purposes. Where a child has two home addresses then provision will only be provided from their 'main residence'.

'Main residence' will be considered as being the address at which your child is registered whilst attending school, with their GP, and, if applicable, the address of the parent who is in receipt of child benefit or child tax credits.

Review of Provision & Eligibility

Where travel assistance is approved and provided, Ealing Council will review travel arrangements on at least an annual basis; and will reassess eligibility when the child / young person reaches the end of each educational key stage, transitions to a new school and / or if personal circumstances change.

This will help ensure that travel assistance arrangements continue to meet your child's needs as well helping them move towards greater independence for adulthood. Travel assistance will be discussed at your child's annual review if they have an EHCP/ SEN statement.

Between reassessments, travel assistance arrangements will stay in place unless:

- assistance has been agreed for a limited period
- the child changes school
- the child moves home during an academic year
- the child's needs change significantly

Whilst the form of travel assistance will not change, sometimes during the year collection/drop off times and/or the route your child may travel on may change. We will endeavour to keep change to a minimum, but where a change is required we will inform you with as much notice as possible.

If your child changes school (including school site) or their home address changes then travel arrangements will be cancelled from the date the child moves home/school. For travel arrangements to be reinstated you will need to be reassessed. Travel assistance will only be provided if the child continues to meet the eligibility criteria.

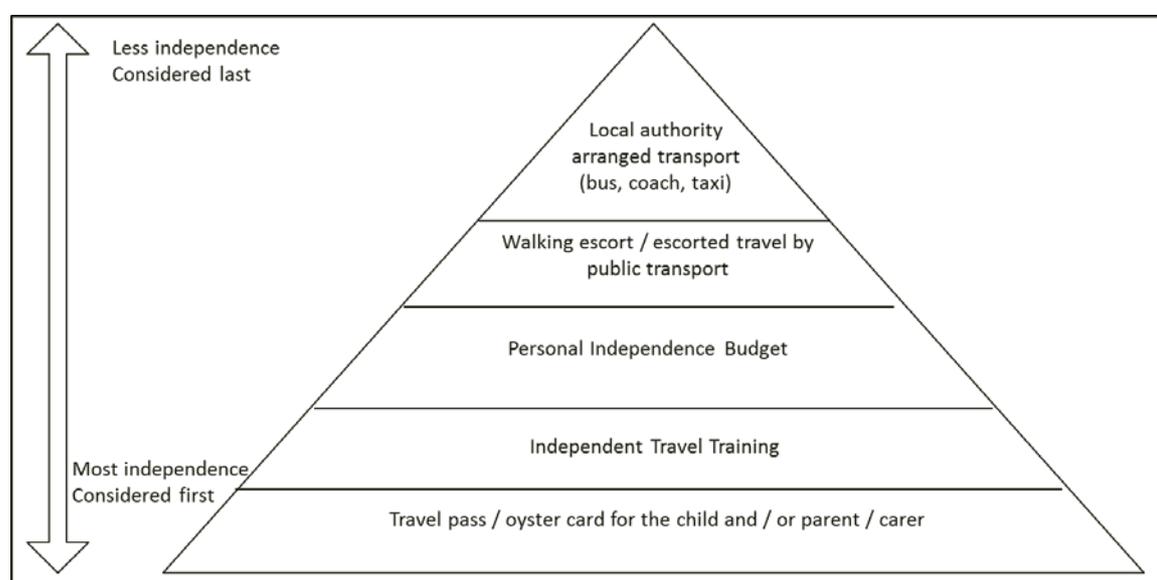
Section 4: Forms of Travel Assistance Offered

Range of Travel Options Considered

The parent / carer is responsible for getting their child or young person to school, full responsibilities of the parent / carer are set out in appendix A.

If it is decided that Ealing Council will assist the parent / carer in taking their child to and from school, a range of options will be considered. The type of travel assistance offered will reflect the evidence and information provided to ensure their needs are supported accordingly.

To support your child's needs and assist their move towards independence for adulthood the Council will explore travel options that offer the greatest level of independence to your child based on their needs. All pupils should be encouraged to use independent options as these help children / young people to develop life skills and often support a healthy lifestyle by including walking as part of the journey. The following travel options will be considered, please note that this list is not exhaustive and other forms of travel assistance may also be offered:



Transport for London (TfL) Travel Pass/Oyster Card

If your child can use and access public transport (accompanied as necessary) then the Council will expect the current travel assistance offer from TfL to be appropriate for your child. The current offer allows free travel on buses and trams for children of school age up until the end of the academic year in which they turn 16. This means that most children attending school will not require any further support from the council for travel arrangements, including those who have an EHC Plan/statement.

For further information and details about how to apply go to the Transport for London website (<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/>), your local underground station or post office.

In some circumstances, the Council will agree to provide a travel card that allows travel on the London Underground and London Overground trains in addition to bus and tram travel.

Independent Travel Training

To support children to travel independently, Ealing Council may offer independent travel training as their travel assistance offer. The training will support your child to be taught the necessary skills that will allow them to effectively deal with and resolve a range of scenarios that they might encounter when travelling on public transport.

The benefits of this travel option for the family and young person are:

- increased independence, confidence and personal mobility
- increased access to education opportunities at colleges and universities, local services and leisure activities
- reduced reliance on family members to provide on-going travel to current and future activities and services
- improvement in life skills, such as handling money, personal and road safety skills
- increased opportunity to gain employment and further education

A trainer will travel and work with your child on a 1:1 basis to ensure the following aspects of the training are understood and put in to practice independently:

- timetables (including time management)
- orientation
- road safety
- accessibility (access to transport, exits and purchasing tickets)
- communication
- personal safety (including what-if scenarios)
- travel preparation

If the Travel Independence Hub identify through either the assessment process or annual reviews that your child may have the potential to be supported to travel independently through a travel training programme then they will arrange for the travel training provider to conduct an assessment to decide if training is a suitable option for your child now or in the future.

If the outcome of the assessment identifies that your child is not suitable for independent travel training at that time then an alternative offer of travel assistance will be made by the Council. If in the future, your child is able to benefit from the training then arrangements will be made to begin training at the earliest opportunity.

The assessment is required to identify if your child is suitable for travel training. Travelling independently is a key life skill, and we would like to offer the opportunity to participate to as many children and young people as possible. The Council will assess your child's suitability for the training before considering or offering alternative travel options.

Training programmes last on average 12 weeks, and your child will only

complete the training once both the trainer and you agree that your child has reached their independent travel goals and can agree a future route to school which maximises their independence.

Personal Independence Budget

Compulsory age children eligible for travel assistance may be offered a personal independence budget if appropriate to both your family and the Council. The benefits of this travel option are as follows:

- you can make your own arrangements to best suit the needs of your child
- you can organise travel arrangements to fit around work commitments and other siblings
- the type of travel arrangements organised can take any form that you deem appropriate. Examples of options include:
 - using the family car
 - paying a carer to support the child to and from school
 - paying for a bus/train pass so you can travel on public transport with your child to school
 - pool payments with another family to make joint travel arrangements
- you are in control of arrangements and can make changes at any time rather than other more restrictive travel options
- you can organise travel arrangements to allow your child to attend after school clubs or activities in the community

You can request this as an option by contacting the Travel Independence Hub. This option may be of interest to you if:

- you wanted to take your child to school but needed support to make it financially viable for you
- your child has very complex needs and you wanted to make your own travel arrangements
- you wanted to combine the council's contribution with your personal finances to provide your child with bespoke travel assistance to meet their needs and fit in with your family circumstances

If you were offered this form of travel assistance, it would be your responsibility to ensure travel arrangements allow your child to:

- travel safely
- attend school regularly and on time
- be ready to learn once they arrive at school

The value of a personal independence budget offered will be as follows:

- the mileage of a returned journey e.g. driving from home to school, dropping your child off and returning home
- the number of times you transported your child to and from school (total number of return journeys)

Once the total number of miles have been calculated then the personal

independence budget value will be calculated using a rate of 35p per mile

Personal independence budgets will be paid to your bank account in advance of any travel taking place. Attendance levels will be monitored, and money will be reclaimed for non-attendance at school.

Further information can be found on the Local Offer:

<https://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk>

Arranged Transport

If all other options have been explored and identified as not suitable, such as public transport, independent travel, personal independence budgets or walking escorts then Ealing Council may consider providing a vehicle to transport your child to and from school.

Normally, arranged transport is planned to collect many children from agreed collection points into the same school. You should be aware that as children join or leave the school collection times may change. Times are not fixed and may change throughout the year because of the mid-year pupil changes at the school.

Where possible and appropriate, vehicles may collect children attending different schools for an effective use of resources.

All staff are DBS checked and trained. Staff will be provided by a qualified, registered transport provider, working to contractual standards set by the Council.

Collection Points

The Travel Independence Hub may identify that the appropriate form of travel assistance for your child is by means of a collection point.

Ealing Council uses collection points to support the development of independence and preparation for adulthood.

If your child is accessing a collection point you will be responsible for ensuring that your child gets safely to and from the collection point at the appropriate time. If your child's travel assistance offer requires them to walk to a collection point, then it is expected that an adult will accompany them where necessary. You will also be responsible for your child when they are waiting for transport, and when they leave the transport at the end of the day.

In the event of an emergency, late running of the service, or an adult not being present at a collection point, children will be taken to an agreed safe point for collection.

Passenger Assistants

There is no statutory entitlement to a passenger assistant on any route. Any provision of passenger assistants will be based on the individual needs of each passenger and where the use of a passenger assistant will mitigate high

levels of risk. If after assessment Ealing Council identify that a child/young person does not require the support of a passenger assistant then one will not be provided.

A passenger assistant may be used when there are a number of children with significant and complex needs who are travelling on the same vehicle. This will require a separate assessment and will be reviewed on a regular basis to establish if the continued provision of a passenger assistant is required.

Passenger assistants are not authorised to administer emergency rescue medication. Emergency services will be called if a pupil has a medical emergency whilst on the vehicle.

Walking Escort

Where appropriate the Council may consider providing an escort to accompany the child to walk to school or via public transport. Such a scheme may be the forerunner to introducing pupils to travel training and seeks to improve confidence and independence by providing a more 'normal' travel experience for pupils. Escorts may accompany more than one child or even introduce a 'walking bus' route (subject to satisfactory completion of a risk assessment)

Section 5 : How to apply for travel assistance?

Complete an Application Form

If you believe your child may be entitled to travel support you should complete an assistance request form, which can be found on the local offer site:

Website: <https://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk>

You can submit your completed application form either by email using the following addresses:

Email: senta@ealing.gov.uk

Notification of decision

All applications will receive careful consideration. Ealing Council will aim to inform you of the local authority's decision in writing within fifteen working days of receipt of the completed application.

Formal Appeal Process

What if I disagree with a decision?

Where an application for school travel support has been refused, or you believe further consideration of your child's circumstances is required, the following process will apply.

- **Stage 1 – Review**

You should submit your review in writing via email within 20 working days of the original notification of decision. Requests for reviews must be sent by email to senta@ealing.gov.uk

Your request for review must detail all the options explored and considered by the family to make their own travel arrangements, and why these options are not suitable/available.

New information/evidence not included in the original application must also be provided. This should support the circumstances and reasons why you feel travel assistance should be provided, and where possible this information/evidence should be from relevant professionals and should clearly identify how specific needs/circumstances mean that travel assistance is required.

The decision will then be reviewed by the Senior Officer within the Travel Independence Hub. You will receive a decision within 20 working days from the date of receipt of the request for a stage 1 appeal

- **Stage 2 – Appeal**

You have 20 working days to challenge the review decision. The stage 2 appeal will be reviewed by a panel within 40 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 appeal. The panel will consist of the Assistant Director Ealing

Services for Children with Additional Needs, the Assistant Director of School Planning and Resources, and the Head of Disabilities or a nominated substitute identified by the panel members. You should submit your appeal with supporting evidence along with the stage 1 decision to senta@ealing.gov.uk. The panel will consider the appeal in line with this policy. This decision will be sent by letter within 5 working days.

During each stage of the appeal process the reviewing officers/panel will use the evidence available to them to review the previous decision and whether the policy has been applied correctly. When you submit additional information for consideration it may be helpful to consider providing any of the following:

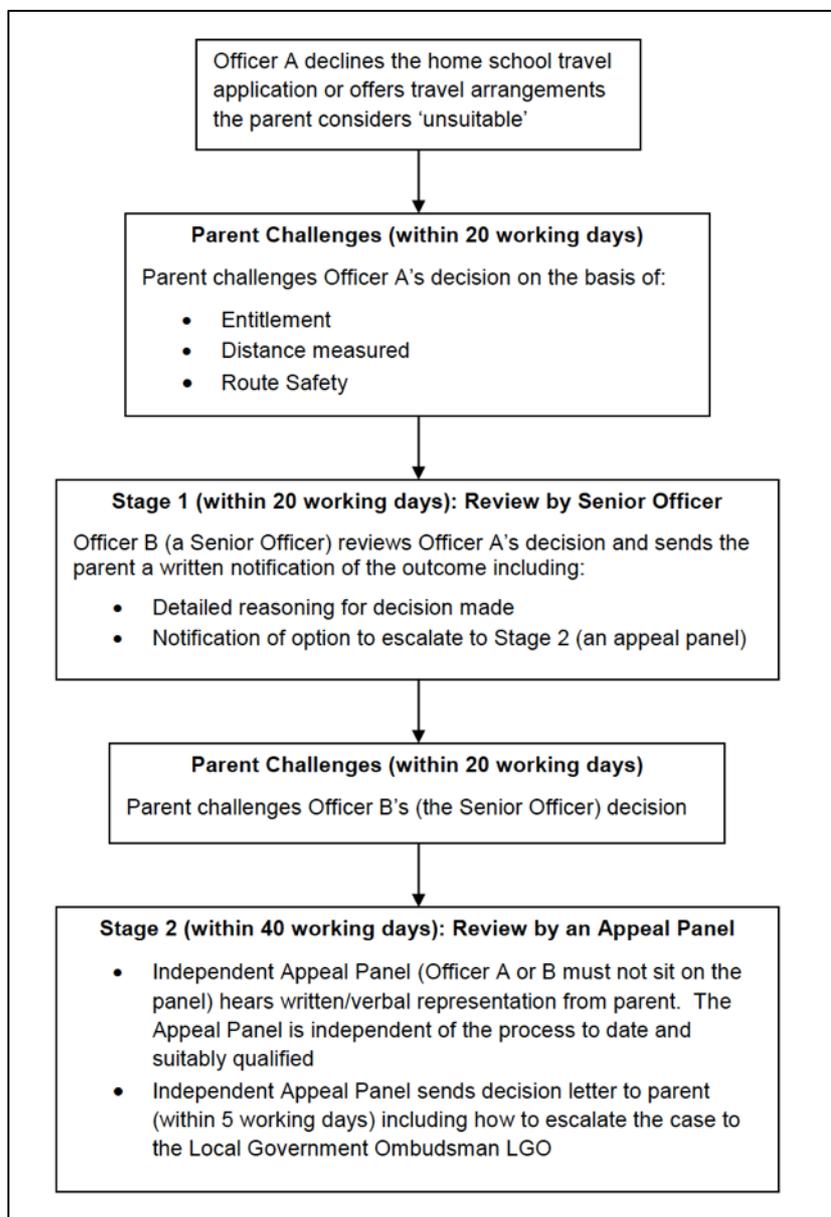
- details of how your child currently travels around outside of school
- examples of incidents/concerns as a result of the Council's original decision
- supporting medical evidence from a consultant
- what efforts have been made by family and friends to support your child with his/her travel assistance and attendance at school
- evidence that alternative travel options have been explored, along with evidence why they are not considered suitable

The appeal process is separate from any complaints or concerns that you wish to raise around the quality of the service that you and/or your child receives.

The appeals process is illustrated in the diagram on the following page.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the assistance you have received and wish to submit a complaint to the Council this can be done on the Ealing Council website: https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201033/council_and_local_decisions/516/complaints



Appeals process illustration

Appendix A: Parent/Carer Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all parents and carers to ensure that their children attend school, including those children with SEND.

Ealing Council has a duty (and powers) to make particular arrangements for children with SEND to facilitate their attendance at school.

You play a key role in ensuring the smooth running of your child's travel assistance, and are required to:

- provide home and work telephone numbers and an emergency contact number and address
- notify the Travel Independence Hub of any changes to normal arrangements
- recognise that travel assistance is provided for the benefit of the child
- make sure that your child is ready at least ten minutes before the pick-up time; transport can wait no more than three minutes after arrival;
- bring your child to the vehicle and assisting with placing them on the vehicle
- always being at the set-down point to meet your child at the end of the school day, contractors must ensure the child is handed over to a responsible adult
- Telephoning 0208825 5544 or emailing sent-transport@ealing.gov.uk as soon as possible if your child is sick or unable to attend school for any reason
- ensuring your child behaves in an acceptable manner on the vehicle so as not to detract from the comfort and safety of other passengers or distract the driver
- treating all staff with courtesy

It is your responsibility to ensure that your child is on time at the correct location for collection and you are available to receive your child after school at the designated collection point.

If you are late on a regular basis for either the pick up or drop off, you will be contacted by an appropriate person from the Council in an attempt to work together to resolve the situation. If the lateness continues the Local Authority will decide on an appropriate course of action.

If you are not at home or at the collection point to meet your child, transport will wait three minutes after the scheduled set-down time and then continue the journey, the transport provider will then attempt to drop your child off for a 2nd time after completing the remainder of the route. If unsuccessful, then your child will be taken to a place of safety.

You will be responsible for the cost of any extra travel involved and supervision provided. If such incidents occur frequently Ealing Council will suspend provision of transport and you will be responsible for travel arrangements to ensure that your child attends school.

Both you and your child's school are expected to take whatever steps are

necessary to ensure appropriate behaviour on home to school travel and to take necessary action when incidents of unacceptable behaviour are reported. It is appreciated that some children with special educational needs will display behaviour which is related to their special educational need. In this situation we will work with the school and yourself to improve behaviour so that your child can travel to and from school safely. Incidents of serious or persistent indiscipline will lead to Ealing Council suspending transport. You will then be responsible for travel arrangements to ensure that your child attends school.