



London Borough of Waltham Forest Travel Assistance Options

for children and young people with special
educational needs and disabilities

December 2017

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide gives details of the home-to-school travel assistance options offered by Waltham Forest council to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

For detailed guidance on home-to-school travel assistance, including detailed eligibility criteria and appeals, please see Waltham Forest Council's "**5-16 Home to School Assistance with Travel Policy**" and "**Post 16 Home to Place of Learning Assistance with Travel Policy**".

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS

Travel assistance options are broken down into four categories:

UNIVERSAL

This level of support is open to all children and young adults in Waltham Forest, offering maximum independence.

FLEXIBLE

This level of support gives parents and carers the freedom to make their own flexible arrangements. This means that children with special educational needs and disabilities receive the travel assistance most suited to their needs, chosen by those who know them best, and with the freedom to change whenever required.

INDEPENDENT

This level of support helps children and young people with complex special educational needs and disabilities to learn to travel independently to school. This means they gain an essential life skill for the future.

SPECIALIST

This level of support is designed to assist children and young people who have the highest level of need with their travel to and from school.

When reviewing applications for travel assistance, the council will always consider these options in the order that they appear in this booklet. This means that 'Universal', 'Flexible' and 'Independent' options will be considered before 'Specialist' travel options.

CONTENTS

PART 1: UNIVERSAL

Free and discounted travel with Transport for London..... 4

PART 2: Flexible

Personal travel budgets 5

Travel passes for parents, carers or escorts 6

Mileage Allowances 7

Combining mileage allowances and travel passes..... 8

PART 3: Independent

Independent travel training and travel assistants 9

PART 4: SPECIALIST

Specialist transport..... 11

PART 5: CHOOSING THE RIGHT OPTION

Choosing the right option for children of primary school age..... 12

Choosing the right option for children of secondary school age 13

Definitions..... 14

PART 6: HOW TO I APPLY FOR TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

How do I apply for travel assistance 15

Notification of decision..... 15



PART 1: UNIVERSAL

Transport for London (TfL) offer a range of free and discounted travel options for children and young people in Waltham Forest.

This level of support is open to all children and young adults in Waltham Forest, allowing them to be as independent as possible in their travel choices.

WHO IS IT FOR?

All children and young people in Waltham Forest, in particular:

- Children and young people who live further away from school than the statutory walking distance
- Children and young people who live within the statutory walking distance but who may benefit from use of public transport, for example due to a special educational need or mobility problem

HOW DOES IT WORK?

For under 11s

Under 11s travel free on London buses and trams, with no need for any kind of travel pass or ticket, or accompaniment

Under 11s travel free on Tube, DLR, London Overground, TfL Rail and some National Rail services, if accompanied by an adult with a valid ticket

5 to 10 Zip Oyster photocard – free travel on Tube, DLR, Overground, TfL Rail and some National Rail services, regardless of whether the child is accompanied

For 11 to 15 year olds

11 to 15 Zip Oyster photocard – free travel on London buses and trams, and child rate on Tube, DLR, London Overground, TfL Rail and some National Rail services

For young people aged 16+

16+ Zip Oyster photocard – free travel on London buses and trams for Waltham Forest residents, and discounted fares on Tube, DLR, London Overground, TfL Rail and some National Rail services

HOW TO APPLY

For full information on these travel options and how to apply, please visit the TfL website (www.tfl.gov.uk).

PART 2: FLEXIBLE

PERSONAL TRAVEL BUDGETS

A Personal Travel Budget is a sum of money given to parents or carers of children with special educational needs or disabilities, to enable them to arrange their child's travel in a way that suits their circumstances best. The budget allows families complete freedom to choose the best possible travel option for their child, with flexibility to change over time or use a combination of options.

Personal Travel Budgets will be offered to all current users of specialist buses or taxis, in order to encourage independence and ensure the best possible assistance is provided for those with complex special educational needs or disabilities.

Summary of benefits of Personal Travel Budgets:

- Independent arrangements to suit you and your child
- Additional funds to cover the cost of a School Parking Permit
- Budget calculated at the start of academic year for the whole year
- Funds in your bank account within first few weeks of each term
- Shorter travel distance
- You set up your own route
- You decide who transports your child – yourself? Local cab firm? Neighbour? A member of a family you can make an arrangement with? Another parent of a child attending the same school? TFL? More flexibility in comparison to a council offered transport
- No pick up points and rigid schedules to accommodate
- Flexibility to manage your own time
- No upfront costs
- You manage your own budget

Who is it for?

Children with complex special educational needs or disabilities, who:

- would like to travel to school using a flexible combination of methods – e.g. 3 days each week in a parent or carer's car, 2 days each week by taxi
- are currently travelling to school using specialist transport such as buses and taxis, but for whom parents would like the freedom to make their own flexible arrangements

How does it work?

When this assistance is offered, the council's Disability Enablement Service will:

- Send you a form to fill in, so that we can add your bank details to our payment system
- Calculate how much your child's budget should be

This budget will then be paid termly, directly into your bank account.

This option is all about giving families flexibility and control. You can spend the personal travel budget how you like, as long as your child gets to and from school on time and in a way that ensures their safety and encourages their attendance. Some ideas include:

- Purchasing a travel pass for yourself or a trusted adult to accompany the child
- Arranging shared travel arrangements with other parents, such as shared driving responsibilities, walking buses or joint taxi bookings
- Covering the cost of driving or cycling to school
- Overcoming barriers that may prevent you accompanying your child to school, for example travel/childcare arrangements for siblings

Please note you are required to retain your receipts which may be requested for inspection in the event of any irregularity.

TRAVEL PASSES FOR PARENTS, CARERS OR ESCORTS

Families can receive financial support to cover the costs of public transport passes. This means that someone can accompany the child on the journey to and from school using public transport. This could be a parent, carer, friend or other family member.

Who is it for?

Any child or young person with special educational needs or disabilities, who can travel on public transport when accompanied, in particular:

- Younger children with special educational needs or disabilities, who are not yet ready to travel on their own
- Older children with special educational needs or disabilities, for whom travelling alone is not appropriate due to their level of need
- Children and young people hoping to undertake independent travel training, but who want to practice with a family member first

How does it work?

When this assistance is offered, the council's Disability Enablement Service will:

- Send you a form to fill in, so that we can add your bank details to our payment system
- Agree a maximum cost that can be claimed each week – this will be based on the distance from the child's home to school and the public transport options you plan to use

The money is paid monthly, directly into your bank account.

At the end of each month, you need to send in a simple form to record the type of travel pass you have purchased and/or the number of journeys you have made to take your child to and from school. This will be used to calculate how much money is owed and this amount will be paid directly into your bank account.

There is no need to provide receipts or bank statements, but these should be retained in case of any future queries.

MILEAGE ALLOWANCES

Parents and carers who have access to their own vehicle can receive a mileage allowance to enable them to take their child to school.

Who is it for?

Any child or young person with special educational needs or disabilities, whose parent has access to their own vehicle, in particular:

- Younger children with special educational needs or disabilities, who are not yet ready to travel on their own
- Older children with special educational needs or disabilities, for whom travelling alone is not appropriate, due to their level of need
- Children and young people who have access to a Motability vehicle, paid for using the higher mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

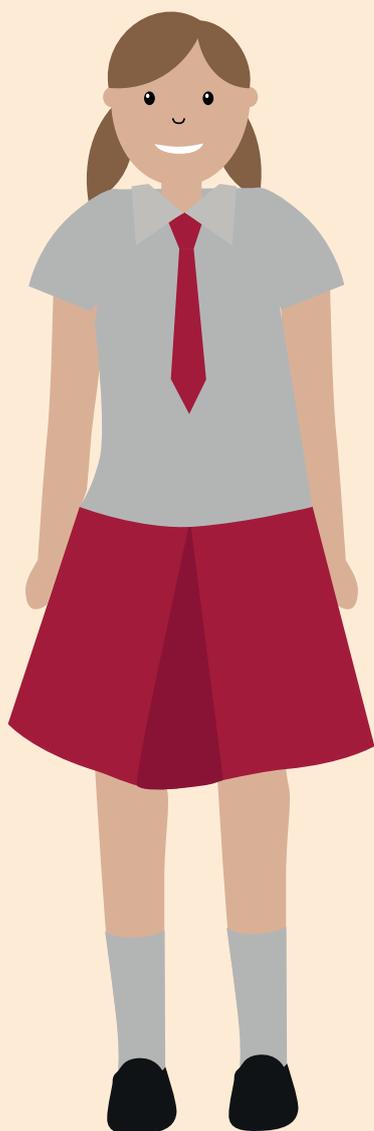
How does it work?

When a mileage allowance is offered, the council's Disability Enablement Service will:

- Send you a form to fill in, so that we can add your bank details to our payment system
- Agree a maximum number of miles that can be claimed each week – this will be based on the distance from the child's home to school

Mileage allowances are paid monthly, directly into your bank account.

At the end of each month, you need to send in a simple form to record the number of miles you have travelled taking your child to and from school. This will be used to calculate how much money is owed and this amount will be paid directly into your bank account.



COMBINING MILEAGE ALLOWANCES AND TRAVEL PASSES

The best travel options for you and your family will depend on a range of factors:

- The distance from home to school
- What public transport options are available
- Who is available to accompany the child

The council wants parents and carers to have the freedom to choose the best option for their child. It could be that different family members would like to travel with the child on different days, or you would like to drive the child to school on three days each week and use the bus for the other two.

When you apply, the council's Disability Enablement Service can work with you to agree maximum costs for mileage and travel passes, so that you have the choice of both options. At the end of each month, you will just need to submit a single form to let the team know what you did so that you receive the right amount.

PART 3: INDEPENDENT

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING AND TRAVEL ASSISTANTS

The Council can provide a bespoke training programme designed to help children and young people learn the skills to travel independently. These programmes consist of training sessions, escorted travel with trained travel assistants and help to apply for relevant travel passes (Zip Oyster etc.) once the training is complete.

For children currently travelling on specialist buses or taxis, Independent Travel Training offers the opportunity to safely become independent and learn an essential life skill for the future.

Who is it for?

Children with complex special educational needs or disabilities, who:

- would like to travel independently to school, but require assistance in learning to do so
- are currently travelling on specialist buses and taxis but are moving from primary school to secondary school
- are currently travelling on specialist buses and taxis but are moving from secondary school to college or another setting

How does it work?

Independent Travel Training is a programme designed to give children and young people the skills to travel to school on their own – this includes road safety, personal safety, money skills, route planning and how to use public transport.



When a child is offered travel training:

- a personal travel plan will be designed for them by an experienced travel trainer, together with the parent(s)/carer(s)
- targets will be set, which will be reported against on a regular basis during the training

The training normally takes between 2 and 12 weeks. Some young people may require an extension to this to become fully independent. The council can also offer travel assistants either before or after the training to give extra support to ensure the maximum success.

How to apply

If your child is currently travelling to school on a specialist bus or taxi, and is moving from primary to secondary school, or from secondary school to college or another setting, the council will discuss travel training with you as part of the annual review of the Education, Health and Care plan. For these children, travel training at these times can offer a great opportunity to improve their independence. You can also contact the Client Relationship Officer with Travel on 0208 496 6500 to discuss this option.

Some parents may wish for their child to be travel trained, others may be trained at the suggestion of the school or another professional working with the young person.

PART 4: SPECIALIST

SPECIALIST TRANSPORT

In exceptional circumstances, the council may offer a place on a shared minibus or taxi so that children can be transported to school. Depending on the needs of the child, this might include a passenger escort or assistant, or the parent may be asked to accompany their child.

As mentioned at the start of this booklet, ‘Specialist’ transport will only be offered to children and young people, for whom no other option is suitable and who have the highest level of need.

Who is it for?

Children and young people with very complex special educational needs or disabilities, who are unable to travel independently due to their level of need, and for whom no other travel assistance options are suitable.

More details

When this assistance is offered, the council’s Disability Enablement Service will:

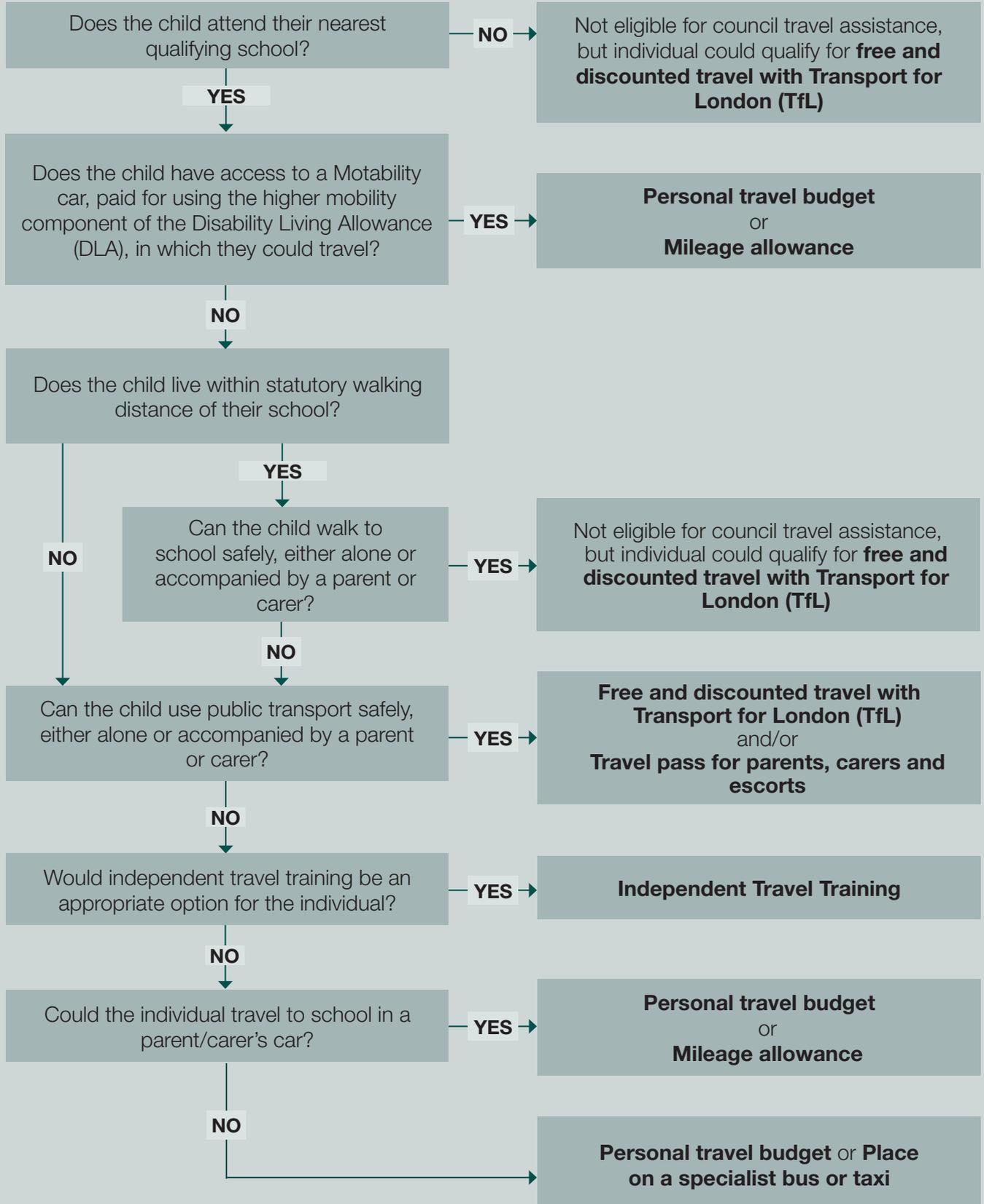
- ask for details on any special requirements that your child has (e.g. space for a wheelchair)
- identify which existing routes are appropriate for your child – this will include checking journey times and pick-up/drop-off points

Specialist transport routes will use pick-up/drop-off points, except where mobility is extremely limited. This means that you will need to be prepared to travel a short distance with your child to and from the pick-up/drop-off point at the start and end of the school day.

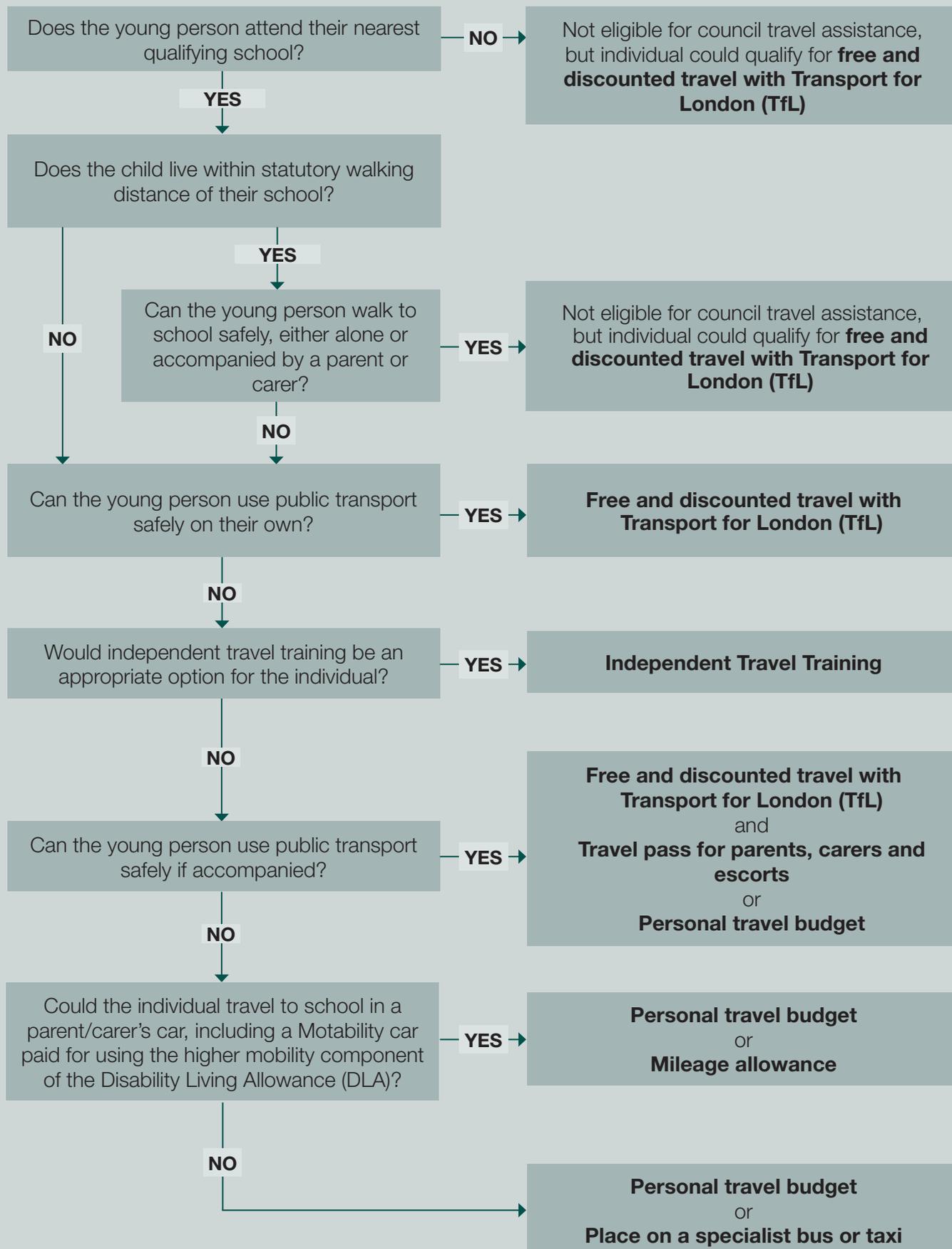


PART 5: CHOOSING THE RIGHT OPTIONS

CHOOSING THE RIGHT OPTION FOR CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE



CHOOSING THE RIGHT OPTION FOR CHILDREN OF SECONDARY SCHOOL AGE



DEFINITIONS

Nearest Qualifying School

Qualifying schools are:

- Community, foundation or voluntary maintained schools
- Community or foundation special schools
- Non-maintained special schools
- Pupil referral units
- Maintained nursery schools
- City technology colleges, city colleges for the technology of the arts, or academies, including free schools and university technical colleges

References to the 'nearest qualifying school' mean the nearest school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age and ability of the child, and special educational needs.

Most often, a 'qualifying school' will be named on a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). If more than one school is named on the EHCP, the 'nearest qualifying school' will be the one which is closest to the child's home.

Statutory walking distance

The 'statutory walking distance' is defined by the Education Act 1996 as:

- 2 miles if the child is under 8 years old
- 3 miles if the child is 8 years old or older

The distance is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety.

PART 6: HOW DO I APPLY FOR TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

Parents and carers who believe that their child may be entitled to travel support should obtain and complete a “Home to School Travel Assistance – Application Form”.

The application form is available for download on [Waltham Forest Directory](#)

If you are unable to access the application form on-line please contact the Client Relationship Officer to request a copy:

Disability Enablement Service
FAO: Client Relationship Officer
First floor
Wood Street Health Centre
6 Linford Road
Walthamstow
London, E17 3LA

Tel: 020 8496 6500

Email: assistancewithtravel@walthamforest.gov.uk

NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

All applications will receive careful consideration. Parents and carers will be informed of the local authority’s decision in writing within 20 working days of receipt of the completed application.

WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE DECISION?

Parents and carers, who are not happy with the outcome of their application, need to follow the Appeals and Complaints Process described at Waltham Forest Council’s ‘5-16 Home to School Assistance with Travel Policy’ and ‘Post 16 Home to Place of Learning Assistance with Travel Policy’.