



Lambeth Home to School Transport Policy (Other than SEND) 2023

For children and young people of
compulsory school age 5-16

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Section 1: Introduction

This document sets out the London Borough of Lambeth's policy for travel arrangements for children of statutory school age, aged 5-16 who are eligible for travel support to and from their school/place of learning, other than those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, (SEND) and/or an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

The needs of young people with SEND and/or EHCPs are dealt with separately to this policy, and details can be found in [Lambeth's Travel Support Policy](#).

Lambeth Council is committed to ensuring that eligible children and young people are provided with suitable travel arrangements to facilitate their attendance at school.

This policy aims to clarify the arrangements for children and young people attending mainstream schools and education provision, including:

- Who is eligible for support with travel
- What the eligibility criteria are
- What support is available in Lambeth
- How to apply
- How decisions are made
- What to do if parents do not agree with an outcome

Most children and young people living in Lambeth do not receive or require travel assistance to get from home to school or their place of learning. Generally, Lambeth Council believes that the majority of children and young people in Lambeth will be able to travel on free public transport. It is recognised however, that some children and young people may need additional support and assistance in accessing education, and Lambeth have a legal duty to make appropriate arrangements to support these children and young people.

Lambeth Council provides a range of support, including various ways to support families to use London's excellent public transport links. The type of assistance provided will depend on the child's or young person's individual needs. Wherever possible, arrangements will aim to promote and support their independence and wellbeing, as well as maximising benefits for the environment.

Section 2: Relevant legislation

Under the Education Act 1996 (“the Act”), local authorities in England have a duty to make such suitable home-school travel arrangements as the local authority considers necessary for children and young people of compulsory school age (5-16 years old) who are identified as eligible for assistance. These arrangements must be made free of charge, and the school in question must be a “qualifying school” (see section 4).

The law says:

All provisions made under this act are to be provided free of charge. (Section 508B (1), Education Act 1996)

A local authority is **not** required to make home to school travel arrangements for an eligible child where suitable (free) home to school travel is provided by someone else e.g., travel provision made available to children by Transport for London.

In preparing this document, we have had regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- the Education Act (1996), with reference to sections 508B, 508C, 509AA and Schedule 35, as inserted by the Education and Inspections Act (2006);
- the Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance (statutory guidance issued in 2014 and hereafter referred to as ‘the Guidance’);
- the Children and Families Act (2014);
- the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Regulations (2014);
- the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (2014);
- the Post-16 Transport to Education and Training Guidance (statutory guidance issued in 2017).

Section 3: Eligibility

The Council has a duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 508B) to ensure that suitable Travel Assistance is provided, for eligible children and young people, to facilitate their attendance at school. 'Eligible children' are defined in schedule 35 B of the Education Act 1996 as those children and young people of compulsory school age (5 -16) for whom free travel assistance will be required.

These criteria set out in the Act are based upon:

- special educational needs, disability or mobility problems
- statutory walking distances
- extended rights for those on low incomes
- unsafe walking routes

Eligibility for young people with special educational needs, disability or mobility problems are considered under the SEND travel support policy. This can be found at [here](#).

Statutory Walking Distances

The Council has a duty to provide free Travel Assistance for pupils whose homes are outside the statutory walking distance to their nearest suitable school:

- More than 2 miles (if the child is below the age of 8); or
- More than 3 miles (if the child or young person is aged 8 to 16)

Extended Rights for those on low incomes

A child is also eligible for free home to school Travel Assistance if they are eligible for free school meals or if a parent with whom they live receives maximum Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit and:

- they are aged 8 to 10 years, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than 2 miles from their home;
- they are aged 11 to 16 years, and attend one of their three nearest suitable schools which is between 2 and 6 miles from their home; or
- they are aged 11 to 16 years, attend a school that is between 2 and 15 miles from their home that their parents have chosen on the grounds of their religion or belief and, having regard to that religion or belief, there is no suitable school nearer to their home.

The introduction of Universal Credit has not changed the way eligibility for extended rights to home to school transport is determined. It will remain the case that children and young people will be eligible for extended rights if they meet the criteria set out above.

Where, during the course of a school year, a child ceases to be eligible for free school meals, or a parent ceases to receive maximum Working Tax Credit, the local authority will continue to provide free home to school travel assistance for the remainder of that school year.

Section 3: Eligibility

Safe Walking Routes

A child is eligible for free home to school travel assistance if they attend their nearest suitable school and:

- it is within the statutory walking distance of their home; and
- they cannot reasonably be expected to walk there because the nature of the route means it would be unsafe for them to do so; and
- there is no reasonable alternative route, within the statutory walking distance, that it would be safe for them to walk.

A Safe walking route is defined in the statute as a route which is safe for the child to walk accompanied if necessary (appropriate to their age and nature of the route). Routes are assessed to be safe using nationally recognised road safety guidelines. The Council must consider a range of risks, including rivers, ditches, traffic speed, fields of vision for the pedestrian and motorist, and whether the route would be considered safe if the child were accompanied by their parent/carer/guardian. The Council has a duty to provide travel assistance for children and young people who cannot be expected to walk to the nearest suitable school where there is no safe walking route under the relevant statutory walking distance, even if accompanied by an adult.

Other safety considerations

Although there is no statutory duty to provide travel assistance outside the terms set out above, the London Borough of Lambeth will use its discretionary powers to provide additional support to young people believed to be particularly vulnerable, at risk of exploitation or otherwise subject to Safeguarding Concerns which would prevent them from accessing education or training if unsupported. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and any travel arrangements assessed as being required will be regularly reviewed.

Parent/carer accompaniment

It may be unreasonable to expect a child to walk unaccompanied due to their vulnerability or other issues, but reasonable to expect them to walk when accompanied by a suitable person, such as their parent. These are therefore important considerations in determining travel assistance eligibility.

Lambeth will take a range of factors into account when considering the issue of parental accompaniment. The Guidance states, 'The general expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a parent where necessary, unless there is a good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent to do so.' If a parent believes they do have a good reason for being unable to accompany their child to school, Lambeth invites them to explain this to the appropriate officer during the transport assessment process.

Please note that working arrangements and childcare issues will not normally be considered the purposes of assessment to be reasons why a child cannot be accompanied.

Parental accompaniment and the age of the child

In assessing if accompanying their child to school is reasonable, the Guidance suggests that local authorities may consider the age of the child and whether one would ordinarily expect a child of that age to be accompanied. We would remind parents that the Guidance does not state a specific age at which one would expect a child to be able to walk to school unaccompanied. Our approach is therefore that this point will depend to some extent on the nature of the route and the needs of the young person. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Section 3: Eligibility

Parent disability

Where a parent/carer has a disability, which would make it unreasonable to expect them to accompany their child to school, the parent/carer would be invited to submit medical evidence of their condition or disability. Lambeth would then make appropriate reasonable adjustments based on the evidence. Evidence should come from a hospital consultant/specialist wherever possible. GP letters alone are not usually considered as suitable supporting evidence, unless clearly detailing information relating to an ongoing disability/condition and treatment, and how this prevents the parent from accompanying their child to school. GP letters which simply request travel support on behalf of a parent will not be accepted. Parents can contact Lambeth SEND travel team to discuss what might be helpful supporting evidence.

Working commitments

Where a parent or parents work, this will not normally on its own be considered 'a good reason' to provide transport. Lambeth's general approach is that all working parents are expected to make arrangements to get their child to/from school, including using wrap around services, childminders or relying on families and friends as appropriate. Working commitments will be considered in conjunction with other eligibility considerations, on an individual basis.

Section 4: Qualifying schools

Lambeth is only required to provide travel assistance to a qualifying school.

Qualifying schools are:

- Community, foundation or voluntary schools;
- Community or foundation special schools;
- Pupil referral units;
- Maintained nursery schools; and,
- City Technology Colleges, City Colleges for the Technology of the Arts, academies, free schools, and university technical colleges.

Support to attend Independent/ independent special schools will normally only be considered where they are named in Section I of a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which will continue to be considered under the SEND travel support policy.

Lambeth will normally only provide travel assistance to the nearest suitable school – i.e. the nearest qualifying school which can meet the child's needs and offer the child a place. Sometimes a parent's preferred school is not the nearest suitable school. In such cases, Lambeth may refuse to provide travel assistance if the cost of the placement plus transport would be significantly more expensive than the nearer placement.

Children attending schools on grounds of religion or belief

Ordinarily assistance with travel to a faith school will only be provided if it is the nearest suitable school. If parental preference results in children's attendance at a faith school when there are suitable schools nearer to home, then no travel assistance will normally be provided. However, if children meet the Extended Rights eligibility category criteria, then travel assistance to a faith school which is not the nearest suitable school may be considered.

Under Extended Rights, when considering whether a faith school is preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, Lambeth will consider the nature of other schools that may have been named as higher preferences on the application form. For an application for travel assistance to be agreed under this condition, the expectation will be that the school that is preferred on the grounds of religion or belief will be named above any non-faith schools that have been named on the application form.

When applying under Extended Rights for travel to a faith school, parents must provide supporting evidence regarding their genuine adherence to their religion or belief, and this will normally be confirmed by asking their minister of religion to sign the application form.

Section 5: Travel assistance available for eligible children in Lambeth

If an assessment finds that a child is eligible for travel assistance to their nearest qualifying school, the next step is to determine what the most appropriate form of travel assistance will be. This will depend on the child's individual needs. Lambeth recognises the importance of providing 'suitable' travel which, taking into account the child's individual needs, should be safe, stress-free and allow them to arrive at their educational placement ready to learn.

Where more than one mode of transport is suitable, Lambeth will choose the option which represents the most efficient use of resources and/or the most sustainable. Options for travel assistance include, but are not limited to:

- Provision of a travel card for the child to use on public transport (train, tube, and DLR in addition to the use of bus and tram currently available via Transport for London <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel>)
- Provision of an Oyster card or travel card for a parent, carer or other responsible adult;
- Travel reimbursements or personal budgets to facilitate the payment of reasonable travel expenses where the parent, carer or appropriate adult arranges appropriate travel for the child;
- A seat on a vehicle (suitably adapted as necessary). In most cases, the vehicle will be shared with children and young people attending the same or nearby school;
- Any other creative and efficient suggestions made by parents or carers. An example could be for Lambeth to fund wrap around clubs for a noneligible sibling, to facilitate parents/carers supporting their eligible child to/from school.

All cases will be considered on their individual merits, but Lambeth will look first at the use of public transport or provision of reimbursements, with the expectation that, where possible, parents will accompany their children to attend school.

Timings

Transport provision normally be at the beginning and end of the normal school day. In cases of exclusion, illness etc, when a child has to go home during the course of the school day the parent/carer is responsible for transport. Travel assistance will not be provided to accommodate attendance at optional breakfast clubs or optional after school activities.

We expect children and young people to be attending school for a full day, and therefore transport will not usually be provided for reduced timetables, except in very exceptional circumstances. Each case will be considered individually.

Where a seat on a school bus or shared vehicle is provided, the Transport collection/arrival times are determined by geography in relation to the school. Individual requests for earlier/later times are not usually possible, for example, where parents need to leave for work. Each request will be considered, and Lambeth will endeavor to assist wherever possible, but we cannot guarantee to be able to adjust timings.

Section 5: Travel assistance available for eligible children in Lambeth

Home address

'Home-to-school' transport is just that: transport to school, and transport home again, i.e. only two journeys at the beginning and end of the usual school day. This will be from an agreed pick up/drop off point, normally the home address.

Lambeth are not normally able to provide travel assistance to/ from two addresses. Families of children from split parental homes will usually be required to decide which home is their chosen address for travel assistance purposes; the Council may require proof of this address. Families can contact Lambeth SEND Travel support policy to discuss their individual circumstances as required.

Travel Assistance will generally not be provided to and from alternative addresses, for example respite centres or relatives, if doing so would incur additional costs or be disruptive to a shared route. In some cases, we are able to arrange to collect or drop children from alternative addresses which are close to home/ within Lambeth. This will be discussed and considered on an individual basis.

Lambeth will only provide travel assistance for Lambeth residents. In cases where families move into a different Borough, even if temporarily, Lambeth will no longer be responsible for providing travel support. An application would need to be made to the new residing Borough. Lambeth may offer temporary support in some cases (see Section 8 Discretionary support)

Behavioural Issues

Any person behaving in an inappropriate or dangerous manner will be reported and their parents will be contacted by the Local Authority as to the action that will be taken.

Bullying, including the use of hate speech, will not be tolerated and will be reported to parents and school. Any child or young person found to be bullying or intimidating others will have their transport withdrawn.

If a child has to be separated from a shared route due to behavioural issues, especially when they result in health and safety issues for other children, Lambeth will usually offer a direct payment to parent to make alternative arrangements. Lambeth will not arrange a separate taxi except in the most exceptional circumstances which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Looked-After Children

For looked-after children who are placed out-of-authority, the providing authority, where the child is ordinarily resident, is responsible for assessing the transport needs for the child. If transport is agreed by that authority, the local authority to which the child belongs must pay to the providing authority such amounts as agreed between them.

Section 5: Travel assistance available for eligible children in Lambeth

Financial responsibility for travel support will sit with the social care team responsible for the care placement if this placement is outside of Lambeth. Payments are made in line with the Inter-Authority Recoupment Regulations.

Sustainable Transport Duty

As a result of declaring a climate emergency, Lambeth is committed to ensuring that its operations are carbon neutral by 2030. Lambeth will significantly reduce the use of vehicles for council business and where possible replace with sustainable travel options or use ultra-low emission vehicles. In considering what might be the most appropriate form of travel assistance, Lambeth will have regard to the sustainable transport duty, wherever possible. This means that, where appropriate, Lambeth will offer a sustainable mode of transport, such as independent travel training, walking, or payments to facilitate use of public transport or cycling.

Cycle training is available via Lambeth's road safety team. Details can be found online at <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/streets-roads-transport/cycling-walking/sign-free-cycle-training>

More information relating to Lambeth's decision to declare a climate emergency can be found [here](#)

More information about Lambeth's Transport Strategy can be found at this address: <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/transport-strategy>

Section 6: Applications and contact

Applications should be made online via Lambeth Local Offer <https://lambeth.gov.uk/send-local-offer>

We can also email or post a copy of the application if requested.

You can contact the team using the details below:

Tel: 02079266839
Email: transport@lambeth.gov.uk

Postal Address:
SEND Travel Assistance
London Borough of Lambeth
PO Box 734
Winchester
SO23 5DG

Office Address:
SEND Travel Assistance
1st Floor Civic Centre
6 Brixton Hill
London
SW2 1EG

Applications are considered by senior officers at a fortnightly Panel, and we endeavour to consider all cases within 30 days of receipt. Decisions letters will usually be posted, up to a week following Panel. If support is agreed, a member of the team will contact you by telephone to discuss arrangements. If you are unhappy with the decision you can follow the appeals process in [Section 8](#).

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that application forms have been completed fully and received by the Travel support team. Incomplete applications may not be accepted and will cause delay to the request being scheduled for Panel.

Parents and carers will be supported as necessary to ensure the correct paperwork is received and completed as required. Please let us know if you require additional support.

At all times, including during the application process, it remains the legal responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Reviews/reapplications

Any travel assistance will be reviewed regularly and changes to the offer of support may be made, in line with best value.

Whilst we endeavour to maintain consistency, there may be times when the transport provider and/or staff are reviewed and may be subject to change at short notice.

Any travel assistance provided will be reviewed regularly and changes to the offer of support may be made, in line with best value. Whilst we endeavour to maintain consistency, there may be times when the transport provider and/or staff

are reviewed and may be subject to change at short notice.

If you are in receipt of travel assistance and there are any significant changes in circumstances e.g. a change of address or change of school placement, you will need to reapply for transport and eligibility will be reassessed.

Please allow up to 30 days for applications to be processed. This is particularly important if applying for travel support to commence at the start of the academic year (September). The team have a large volume of requests at this time of year and late requests may not be processed in the desired timeframe.

You will need to reapply for transport at the end of year 6, prior to secondary transfer (even if there is no change of placement) and at the end of year 11 when a young person is moving into post 16 education. Applications should be made in the same way as set out above. Please allow up to 30 days for applications to be processed. This is particularly important if applying for travel support to commence at the start of the academic year (September). The team have a large volume of requests in the run up to September and late requests may not be processed in the desired timeframe.

Section 7: Discretionary support and provision for other age groups in Lambeth

Children under compulsory school age

Lambeth does not have a duty to provide travel assistance for children under compulsory school age, and we do not normally do so. If you believe there are compelling and exceptional reasons for such provision to be made, please contact the travel support team to discuss the matter.

Young people aged 16-18

Local authorities have different responsibilities regarding travel arrangements for post-16 learners with SEND needs. This can be found in the SEND Travel support policy.

Young adults 19 to 25

LAs have a duty to make such arrangements for the provision of transport as they consider necessary in respect of:

(a) adults (i.e. those who are aged 19 or over) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at local authority maintained or assisted further or higher education institutions or institutions within the further education sector; and

(b) relevant young adults with an EHC plan (which can only be maintained up until the age of 25) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education or training outside the further and higher education sectors. For those young adults, the local authority's duty only applies where the local authority has secured the provision of education or training at that institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training.

These applications are considered by Adult Social Care on a case-by-case basis. The team can be contacted on 0207 926 5555 or adultsocialcare@lambeth.gov.uk

Moving out of Lambeth

Lambeth will only provide travel support for Lambeth residents. In cases where families move into a different Borough, even if temporarily, Lambeth will no longer be responsible for providing travel support. The SEND team in Lambeth should be notified immediately of any house move so that the child's SEND file can be transferred to the new Authority. A transport application would need to be made to the new residing Borough as soon as a move is known. We understand that in some circumstances, housing moves are made at very short notice, particularly for those in temporary accommodation. Lambeth may offer short term travel support, to allow time for the new Borough to process the necessary paperwork and agree support. This will be determined on a case by case basis and will be for a maximum period of 2 weeks.

Section 8: Appeals

London Borough of Lambeth follows the appeals process set out in the Statutory Guidance.

Stage One: review by a senior officer

If a parent is not happy with Lambeth's decision regarding travel assistance, they have a right to request a review of the decision to be made by a senior officer to the person(s) who originally conducted the assessment.

The parent has 20 working days from receipt of Lambeth's decision to make a written request for such a review. In their written request, the parent should detail:

- why they believe the decision should be reviewed; and,
- any personal and/or family circumstances they believe should be taken into consideration when the decision is reviewed.

An officer senior to the original decision-maker will then review the original decision. In most cases, we would anticipate this to take place within 20 working days of receipt of the parent's written request. However, in a

very complex case, we reserve the right to take more time to conduct the review.

After reaching a decision, the senior officer will send the parent a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review. This will set out:

- the nature of the decision reached;
- how the review was conducted;
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process;
- what factors were considered;
- the rationale for the decision reached; and,
- information about how the parent can escalate their case to stage two if they are still not satisfied with the outcome of their request.

Stage Two: review by an independent appeal panel

If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the first-stage review, they have the option to make a written request to

escalate the matter to stage two. This must be made within 20 working days of receipt of the decision letter from the first-stage review.

Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent's request, an independent appeal panel will consider written and verbal representations both from the parent and officers involved in the case. A detailed written notification of the outcome will be provided within 5 working days of the decision. This will set out:

- the nature of the decision reached;
- how the review was conducted;
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process;
- what factors were considered;
- the rationale for the decision reached; and,
- information about the parent's right to put the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Section 8: Appeals

The independent appeal panel members will be independent of the original decision-making process. They are not, however, required to be independent of Lambeth as a local authority. They will be suitably experienced to consider the specific issues in the individual case.

Further rights of appeal

If the parent does not consider the matter satisfactorily resolved after the second-stage review, they may have further rights of appeal.

If a parent considers that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules, or that there were any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled, they have a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

If a parent considers that the decision of the independent panel was flawed on public law grounds, they may apply for a judicial review.

Section 9: Useful contacts

Lambeth SEND Travel Assistance			
02079266839	transport@lambeth.gov.uk	Postal Address SEND Travel Assistance London Borough of Lambeth PO Box 734 Winchester SO23 5DG https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/send-local-offer/assistance-with-travel	Office Address SEND Travel Assistance 1st Floor Civic Centre 6 Brixton Hill London SW2 1EG
Lambeth Adults Social Care			
02079265555	adultsocialcare@lambeth.gov.uk	Postal Address Adult Social Care PO Box 734 Winchester SO23 5DG	
Lambeth Accessible Transport Team (For blue badges, freedom passes and taxi card applications)			
02079267777	accessibletransport@lambeth.gov.uk	For information and to apply online https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/parking-transport-and-streets	
Transport For London (TFL) (For free and discounted travel on public transport in London)			
		For information and to apply online https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel	
Lambeth Family Action- Participation and Engagement Service (PES)			
07976201031	LambethPES@family-action.org.uk sharon.kitson@family-action.org.uk		
Lambeth Parent Forum			
07903248077	info@lambethparentforum.com	For information and to apply online https://www.lambethparentforum.com	We are 336, 336 Brixton Rd SW9 7AA
Lambeth Parent Forum			
02077372339	info@lambethparentforum.com	For information and to apply online https://www.transportforall.org.uk	We are 336, 336 Brixton Rd SW9 7AA