

London Borough of Lambeth

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
Home to School Travel Assistance: A Guide**

2019

Introduction

This guide is designed to provide brief information and advice to parents and carers regarding the services that may be available to assistance children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities travelling to and from school.

What is home to school travel assistance?

Home-to-school travel assistance is assistance that may be provided by the Local Authority in certain instances to ensure that a child can access their place of education. There are many forms of assistance that may be offered to families, and a number of factors are considered when deciding whether assistance is to be provided and, if so, what form of assistance it will be.

Who is eligible for travel assistance?

If a child/young person has an EHC Plan (or a Statement of Special Educational Need) they may be eligible for home-to-school travel assistance from SEND. The majority of pupils and students with EHC Plans as a result of their SEND do not need and do not receive travel assistance. However, there may be some pupils and students with severe learning difficulties, physical and medical needs who may need travel Assistance to assist parents in getting them to school.

If you think that your child may be eligible, please refer to the 'How to apply for travel assistance' section of this document for further information.

More detail on the eligibility criteria used when assessing applications for home-to-school travel assistance can be accessed Lambeth's "*Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Home to School Travel Assistance Policy*".

General Eligibility Rules

- If a parent/carer chooses to send their child to a school other than the nearest suitable school they are then responsible for all travel assistance to that chosen placement;
- The offer of a school place does not in any way guarantee travel assistance;
- The parent/carer maintains responsibility for ensuring their child attends school;
- Travel assistance may be withdrawn if the child's behaviour is deemed to be a health and safety risk to the provider or others travelling on the same route;

What journeys are eligible for travel assistance?

Travel assistance is awarded for journeys to and from the educational setting at the beginning and end of the day. After school activities and educational trips should be

met by the educational placement or the parent/carer. In addition, travel assistance is not usually provided for the following:

- Reduced timetables
- Hospital, medical, or dental appointments;
- Children taken ill during the school day;
- Schools where parent/carers are making their own arrangements;
- Schools which are not the nearest school able to meet the needs of the pupil.
- Travel to/from respite or alternative addresses (assessed on a case by case basis)

What about parents/carers with a disability?

Where a parent's/carer's disability prevents them from providing travel assistance for their child the local authority will consider free travel assistance for the child. This will still be subject to an assessment of need.

What if my child doesn't have an EHC Plan/Statement of SEN?

SEND will only consider requests for children with an EHCP. For those without an EHCP, travel assistance will need to be requested from social care. We can assist to signpost you to the right team.

How can I apply for travel assistance?

All requests for travel assistance will be considered by the Transport Commissioner. There is an on-line application form that must be completed. It is vital that this form is filled out fully, as it is this information that will be used to assess eligibility, and any missing information may hinder your application.

To access the online application for travel assistance please click here: <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/send-local-offer/assistance-with-travel>

Requests can take up to 30 days to be considered. You will be notified of the decision in writing.

What are the options for travel assistance?

If your application for travel assistance is approved you may be offered one of the following options:

- **Mileage:** this allows you to claim a petrol allowance for transporting your child to and from school daily;
- **Travel Reimbursements:** This may be for purchasing Oyster cards, rail travel or for you to commission your own travel assistance for your child to attend school;

- **Independent Travel Training:** This service is to deliver a programme of independent travel training to enable your child to travel independently to and from school
- **Bus Service** Your child will be transported to and from school by bus. The parent carer will be responsible for accompanying their child to/from the vehicle for collection and drop off
- **Taxi Service:** In a small number of cases the use of a taxi may be considered.

Note: Escorts/Passenger Assistants

It is expected that many children of secondary age will not require a passenger assistant to travel with them. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

In some cases, travel assistance may be approved on the basis that a parent/carers is expected to travel with their child to school.

Where a Passenger Assistant is provided as part of the travel assistance, every effort will be made to ensure the same Passenger Assistant is provided throughout the period of awarded travel. However, on some occasions there may be a need for the provider to change the Passenger Assistant. This may happen without prior notice but every effort is made to keep this to a minimum.

Note: Mileage Claims/Travel Reimbursements

If you have been awarded mileage as travel assistance for your child you will receive a pre-loaded debit card which can be used to purchase your agreed method of support. We will calculate the amount you will receive, and payments are usually made each term.

In order to release payments, we will need copies of your receipts and child's school attendance, to verify that the money is being used for the correct purpose.

Note: Travel Training

If you have been awarded travel training as travel assistance for your child, you will be contracted by Lambeth's approved provider. There will be an initial assessment made and a training package built for your child.

In some cases the initial assessment may identify that the young person is not suitable for travel training. If this is the case an alternative travel solution may be offered to you, assessed on a case by case basis.

Note: Bus service or Taxi service

If you have been awarded a bus or taxi place for your child, your child will be collected from home and bring them back home at the end of the school day.

All bus/taxi providers have been approved by the authority and where a passenger assistant has been agreed the passenger assistant will have an up to day Enhanced /DBS check.

You will have to take your child to the vehicle. You will be given a timeframe when the bus will be at the pick up point. If you miss the bus/taxi you will have to take your child to school.

We endeavour to park as close as practical to the home address. In some cases, you may be asked to meet the bus/taxi at a pick up point.

Where possible we request the crews to remain the same and all staff working on our contracted journeys must wear ID badges

Children will not be permitted to leave a vehicle unless an authorised adult is at the vehicle to collect the child. Passenger Assistants are not permitted to take children out of the vehicle and walk them to the front door.

[What happens next?](#)

Once travel assistance has been agreed for you child you will receive notification from the Lambeth's travel assistance team. You will be told the type of provision that has been awarded and the details of the travel assistance.

You will be advised when the travel assistance is to start and the details of the provider, if applicable.

[What if I am not happy with the decision of the Transport Commissioner?](#)

If you are unhappy with the decision regarding an application for transport assistance you may appeal against this decision. In the first instance (stage one) your appeal will be considered at SEND Panel and the team will communicate the Panel decision to uphold or overturn your appeal in writing. If you remain unhappy following decision of stage one, you may progress to stage two appeal whereby a panel of Local Authority Officers, independent of the SEND service, will consider your appeal.

If you wish to appeal a decision, please send to transport@lambeth.gov.uk

[What if I have a problem with the transport assistance I am receiving?](#)

If you are unhappy with the transport assistance you are receiving, you should contact Lambeth Travel Assistance Team at the following e-mail address

transport@lambeth.gov.uk . In most cases, issues can be resolved relatively easily using this approach.

Further Information

For further information please refer to Lambeth's "*Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Home to School Travel Assistance Policy*".

Useful Contact Numbers:

Lambeth Travel Assistance Team: 020 7926 6839