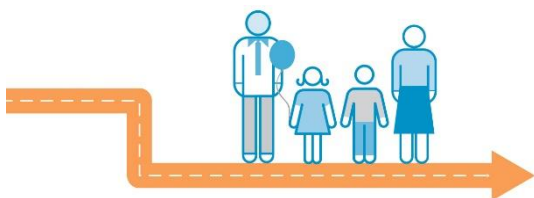


City of London

Home to School Transport Policy 2025/26



REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Revision Date	Status	Summary of Changes
V1	February 2019	Final	Document written as part of a suite of transport documents
V2	August 2023	Final	Changes made following new DfE guidance
V2.1	September 2024	Final	Minor updates to section 2. Free Travel on London Transport (TfL)
V2.2	September 2025	Draft	Clarified support for families on low incomes and reduced the maximum journey time for secondary-aged pupils from 75 minutes to 60 minutes. Update on school transport Services for Looked After Children

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Websites	FYI Directory and Main website	

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Home to School Transport Policy

1. Overview

- 1.1 The legal responsibility for ensuring a child's attendance at school rests with the child's parent. Generally, parents are expected to make their own arrangements for ensuring that their child travels to and from school.
- 1.2 A local authority is only under a statutory duty to provide transport if the nearest qualifying school is not within statutory walking distance of the child's home by the nearest available route or to certain children whose families are on a low income (section 508B and Schedule 35B to the 1996 Education Act as amended). Otherwise, the provision of transport is at the local authority's discretion.
- 1.3 This policy sets out the arrangements for meeting the City of London Corporation's ("The City of London") statutory duty to make travel arrangements for eligible children.
- 1.4 The Post 16 Transport Policy (Including young people with special educational needs and disabilities up to the age of 25 Years) is a separate policy which describes travel support available for young people who have left compulsory education and are continuing their learning at an educational or training setting.
- 1.5 The law does not define precisely the transport arrangements a LA must provide for eligible pupils and leaves the LA to determine at a local level what arrangements are necessary and appropriate.
- 1.6 Since September 2006 all pupils up to the age of 16, have been entitled to free transport on buses within London. The City of London considers that this free transport provides suitable home to school travel arrangements for most eligible children.

2. Free Travel on London Transport (TfL)

Age	Travel concession	Requirements
Under 11 (5-10)	Free travel on bus, Tube, tram, DLR and London Overground.	Must have a 5-10 Zip Oyster photocard; or travel with an adult who is using pay as you go or has a valid ticket (excluding Group Day Travelcards), a Freedom Pass or an Oyster photocard (up to four pupils per adult).
11-15	- Free travel on buses and trams. - Child rate pay as you go fares on Tube, DLR, London Overground, Elizabeth line (excluding between West Drayton and Reading) and IFS Cloud Cable Car. 50% off most fares on National Rail services. 50% off adult rate tickets on the Uber Boat by Thames Clippers River Bus services.	Pupils aged over 10 years and 11 months and under 16 on 31 August need an 11-15 Zip Oyster photocard to travel. Despite the name, this photocard is still valid when your child is 16. Young people aged 15 on 31 August can apply for an 11-15 Zip Oyster photocard.
16+	Young people who live in London	To be eligible for free bus and tram travel the applicant must be:

Age	Travel concession	Requirements
	can get free travel on buses and trams. 50% off adult pay as you go Tube, DLR, London Overground, Elizabeth line (excluding between West Drayton and Reading) and most National Rail services in London.	- aged 16 or 17 on the 31 August and, - living in a London borough Or - aged 18 on the 31 August and, - in full-time education* (their educational establishment must confirm this) and, - living in a London borough *Please visit www.tfl.gov.uk for further information.

3. Eligibility Criteria

ALL OF THE SECTIONS BELOW WILL BE CONSIDERED WHEN ASSESSING ELIGIBILITY FOR SUPPORT

The child is ordinarily resident in the City of London local authority area, or does not have an ordinary residence and is resident in the City of London local authority area for the time being.

3.1 Assistance with travel can be granted, if:

- 3.1.1 A child is aged between 4 and 16 and attending reception up to Year 11; and
- 3.1.2 The school they attend/are due to attend is their nearest qualifying school (see paragraphs 4.1 – 4.4 for more details on nearest qualifying school), with exception to schools attended based on religion or belief (see Section 5); and
- 3.1.3 The shortest walking distance between their home and the school is more than two miles for a child under 8 years of age, or more than three miles for a child aged 8 years and over; and.
- 3.1.4 The free concessions listed in Section Two are not available or are not suitable for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at school (see paragraph 3.2 for more details on suitability).

3.2 Parents/carers (parents used throughout the rest of the document) can use the Department for Education's online 'Find and check the performance of schools and colleges in England' to locate schools that are in close proximity to their residence. www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables

3.3 A free concession journey on the TFL London bus network listed in Section Two will not be considered suitable for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at school if the journey to school has more than one bus change and the travelling time is;

- 3.3.1 More than 45 minutes (duration of travel will be measured by Transport for London's Journey Planner as it is easy to use and accessible) for children who are between the ages of 4 and 11 years (Reception to Year 6)

3.3.2 More than 60 minutes for secondary aged pupils who are between the ages of 11 and 16 (Year 7 to Year 11)

3.4 Additional support for families are on low income

3.4.1 For clarity, all references to free school meals in this section refer only to the Department for Education's national means-tested free school meals criteria. This does not include the universal free school meals offered to all primary pupils by the Department for Education or the Mayor of London. Eligibility for free home-to-school travel remains based solely on a family's entitlement to one of the qualifying means-tested benefits under the national FSM criteria.

3.4.2 Children who are between the ages of 8 and 11 years (Year 4 to Year 6) and who are entitled to free school meals, will qualify for assistance with travel to their nearest qualifying school (see paragraphs 4.1 – 4.4 for more details on nearest qualifying school), if the shortest walking distance between their home and the school is more than two miles and the free concessions listed in Section Two are not available or are not suitable for the purpose of facilitating that child's attendance at school (see paragraph 3.2 for more details on suitability).

3.4.3 Children who are of compulsory school age who are aged 11 or over (Year 7 to Year 11) and who are entitled to free school meals, will qualify for assistance with travel to one of their three nearest qualifying schools (see paragraphs 4.1 – 4.4 for more details on nearest qualifying school), where they live between two miles from the school (with exception to schools attended based on religion or belief, please see Section 5) and the free concessions listed in Section Two are not available or are not suitable for the purpose of facilitating that child's attendance at school (see paragraph 3.2 for more details on suitability).

3.5 Additional grounds of eligibility

Assistance will also be provided for children who are eligible for transport support under s508B and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 but do not meet the criteria under sections 3.1 or 3.3 above and the free concessions listed in Section Two are not available or are not suitable for the purpose of facilitating that child's attendance at school (see paragraph 3.2 for more details on suitability).

4. Assessment

Assessment of nearest qualifying school

A qualifying school is considered to be one that has a vacancy and that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any SEN that the child may have regardless of the location of the school.

4.1 A qualifying school under this policy is:

- (a) community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools;
- (b) academies (including those which are free schools, university technical colleges, studio schools and special schools);
- (c) alternative provision academies;
- (d) community or foundation special schools;
- (e) non-maintained special schools;

- (f) pupil referral units;
- (g) maintained nursery schools (where attended by a child of compulsory school age); and
- (h) city technology colleges and city colleges for the technology of the arts.

4.2 When determining which qualifying school is the nearest to the home address, the shortest walking distance between their home and the school will be calculated.

4.3 If according to this assessment a place would have been available at a nearer school, then free transport will not be given to a school which is further away. This is the case whether the nearest school was named as a preference on the application form.

4.4 If a parent lists their nearest school as a preference other than their first, the City of London will assess whether the child could have been offered their nearest school.

5. Children attending schools on grounds of religion or belief

5.1 Children who are of compulsory school age who are 11 or over (Year 7 to Year 11) and who are entitled to free school meals, or those whose families are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, will qualify for assistance with travel to their nearest faith school (see paragraphs 4.1 – 4.4 for details of the nearest school assessment) preferred on grounds of religion or belief, where they live more than two miles by the shortest walking distance, but not more than 15 miles from that school and the free concessions listed in Section Two are not available or are not suitable for the purpose of facilitating that child's attendance at school (see paragraph 3.2 for more details on suitability).

5.2 When considering whether a faith school is preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, the City of London will take into account the nature of other schools that may have been named as higher preferences on the City of London's common application form. For an application for travel assistance to be agreed under this section, 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.

5.3 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.

6. Looked After Children (under the care of the City of London - all ages)

6.1 The City of London is committed to supporting those most in need, ensuring that travel assistance is available to those who require it. It is recognised that Looked After Children face specific challenges and barriers to achieving their full potential, and as corporate parents we are committed to reducing those barriers.

6.2 For Looked After Children placed under the care of the City of London, each application for transport assistance will be assessed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Once eligibility and support have been confirmed, transport provision will be

arranged as follows:

6.3 If a Looked After Child is educated at a school that is not the nearest suitable school for **less** than one term, transport will automatically be provided by the City of London for this period.

6.4 If a Looked After Child remains at a school that is not the nearest suitable one for **longer** than a term, the City of London will fund transport for one term, during which an application should be made to the nearest suitable school unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the pupil should not move to this school. The view of the Virtual School Head Teacher will be considered when senior officers consider any exceptional circumstances.

7. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

7.1 Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, regardless of their child's or young person's SEND. 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. Parents are also expected to support their older children with independent travel where possible.

7.2 For pupils with SEND, assistance is usually available through their eligibility for Freedom Pass or the Taxicard Service, Disabled Persons Freedom Pass, Taxicard & London Dial-a-Ride.

7.3 A small number of pupils with SEND may have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. An EHC plan does not mean that the City of London will provide any form of travel assistance, and most pupils who have an EHC plan do not require assistance with travel. The application for assistance is separate to the EHC planning process. Travel assistance is based on the pupil's or young person's individual needs.

7.4 The decision to provide travel assistance will be based on consideration of whether the pupil would have considerable difficulty in walking or using public transport due to their mobility needs or associated health and safety issues related to their SEND.

7.5 In determining whether a pupil can reasonably be expected to walk to school, the City of London will consider whether they could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and, if so, whether the pupil's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany their child.

7.6 Where a pupil cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school (even if accompanied by an adult) and, due to the nature of their special educational or medical needs, cannot access public transport, assistance with another form of agreed transport will be made.

7.7 Such assistance will be in the following exceptional circumstances only:

- (a) The pupil has a physical difficulty that rules out the use of public transport
Suitable public transport is not available.
- (b) The pupil's circumstances are such that they would be vulnerable – i.e., at risk of suffering serious harm (even if accompanied by an adult). Consideration will be given to the age and special educational needs of the pupil.

7.8 Support with transport will not be provided where parents chose a school for their child that is further away than the nearest qualifying school (unless their child is receiving education at a place other than a school by virtue of arrangements made in pursuance of section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996). Where a parent requests a particular school for a pupil with an EHC plan which is further from home than an alternative suitable closer school, the City of London may agree with the parent to name that particular school and state that the parent will be responsible for home to school transport.

8. Other Factors

The City of London will also consider the following factors:

- (a) information provided by the parent;
- (b) the availability of similar courses closer to home,
- (c) the nature of the route to school including the safety of the route and alternative routes available;
- (d) the pupil's reasons for studying at a particular educational institution,
- (e) social factors presented by the pupil to support his or her application,
- (f) pupils who suffer from a temporary illness, medical condition or disability, which makes walking or travelling by public transport inappropriate
- (g) any special educational needs which the pupil may have;
- (h) the need for specialist transport; and
- (i) choice based on religion or belief.

8.1 This is not an exhaustive list of the information the City of London takes into consideration when determining whether it is necessary to provide home to school travel arrangements. In addition, the City of London will consider each pupil's individual circumstances on their merits and take account of any representations made to ascertain the need for transport and the type of transport that is available. The City of London will expect to see supporting documentation from a professional or consultant such as a doctor for support under social or medical grounds.

9. Types of travel assistance provided

9.1 Parents cannot choose the type of transport they will receive for their child. Wherever possible, children will be expected to travel by the cheapest form of public transport, so the City of London can provide the most cost-effective service.

9.2 Where assistance with travel is offered, it may take one of the following forms:

- (a) Independent travel skills training to support the pupil to become an independent traveller;
- (b) With the consent of a parent of the child, a walking escort (This will only be provided where it can be demonstrated that the parent cannot accompany their child to school and cannot make alternative arrangements and where the needs of the child are such that they would be at risk if unaccompanied);

- (c) With the consent of a parent of the child, reimbursement of mileage allowance for parents who are able to transport their children to and from school;
- (d) With the consent of a parent of the child, a personal travel budget for parents to arrange transport themselves;
- (e) A place on a shared taxi route with a passenger assistant;
- (f) An individual taxi with a passenger assistant where there is no opportunity for a shared route. Only in exceptional cases where it is deemed one to one;
- (g) See Section 10 for pupils with SEND attending termly residential schools.

9.3 Travel assistance is from home to school on a daily basis (Mon-Fri), term time only in accordance with the school's opening hours. Other than transport to a residential provision, travel assistance outside of these times is not provided and any transport to another educational setting outside of the school day is the responsibility of the parent.

10. Independent Travel Training

As they reach secondary school age, most pupils with SEND will want to start to travel independently whenever possible. For some pupils with SEND this may not be possible until they are older, whilst a very small number may never be able to do so. Where the City of London has agreed to provide travel assistance it will expect secondary schools and colleges to provide independent travel training wherever possible. If appropriate the City of London may provide travel training.

11. Other considerations - Residential schools

11.1 For children and young people aged 5–16 with special educational needs and disabilities who attend residential schools on a termly basis, the City of London will support:

- one journey at the start of each half term; and
- one journey at the end of each half term

11.2 It is expected that the majority of these children and young people will travel either by public transport (accompanied by a parent as necessary) or be transported in a parent's vehicle. The City of London will offer reimbursement of mileage costs or public transport expenses in these cases. There may however be exceptional cases where specialist transport could be considered.

12. Reviewing support for travel

12.1 Some pupils will require home to school travel and support throughout their time in education. For others, increased independence and improved skills will mean that this provision is no longer necessary. The provision of home-to-school travel support will therefore be reviewed at least annually, usually through the pupils' Annual Review. If the City of London believes it is no longer required, the offer of support may be withdrawn.

12.2 If a pupil who is receiving travel support moves from one educational setting to another, or if the family moves home, the City of London will reassess the need for travel support. It will not be agreed without a reassessment. Families should therefore advise the City of London well in advance of any such move.

13. Applications, Appeals and Complaints

Applications

Applications for travel assistance should be made to:

The Education and Early Years' Service, PO Box 270, Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ
Education and Early Years Service <EEYService@cityoflondon.gov.uk>

Contact details: 020 7332 1002

Where an application for assistance is made for a pupil with SEND or health related conditions, the Education and Early Years' Service will also consider written evidence from parents and pupils, educational institution and/or other relevant professionals. They will also consider reference to travel training needs. Each request will be considered on its merits.

Notification of decision

The decision to provide travel assistance is made by the Education and Early Years' Service and parents or the young person will be informed in writing. Applicants will also be informed of how to make representations about the decision and how to appeal if they are not happy with the decision about:

- the transport arrangements offered;
- their child's eligibility;
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances; and
- the safety of the route.

The flow chart at appendix A sets out the review/appeals process.

14. Appeals

13.1 Stage 1

Parents can ask the City of London to review its decision by appealing and sending any additional information to the Education and Early Years Team. When requesting a review, it is important to supply as much evidence as possible to support the request. For example, information about family circumstances, details of how the child currently travels to school and any concerns arising from that, whether anyone is able to accompany the child to and from school etc.

The appeal will be reviewed by a Senior Officer who will respond within 20 days outlining the reasons for their decision and notification of the option to escalate to stage 2.

13.2 Stage 2

The appeal will be reviewed by an Independent Appeal Panel made up of officers who were not involved in the original decision-making process. Within 40 working days of receipt of the appeal, the Panel will review the decision and consider written and verbal representations from the parents and officers involved in the case and give a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days).

Appendix A

Home to school travel and transport – Review/Appeals Process Flowchart

The Education and Early Years' Service declines the home to school travel application or offers travel arrangements that the parent considers "unsuitable"



Parent challenges (within 20 working days)

Parent challenges the decision on the basis of:

- Entitlement
- Distance measurement
- Route safety
- Consideration of exceptional circumstances



Stage 1 (within 20 working days): Review by a Senior Officer

The Senior Officer will review the decision and sends the parent a written notification of the outcome including:

- Detailed reasoning for the decision made
- Notification of option to escalate to stage 2 (an independent appeal panel)

The Senior Officer is independent of the process to date and suitably qualified



Parent challenges (within 20 working days)

Parent challenges the decision of the Senior Officer



Stage 2 (within 40 working days): Review by an Independent Panel

The Panel is independent of the process to date and suitably qualified.

The Panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case and will give written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days), setting out how the decision was reached.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

If the applicant feels that the City of London did not comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal was handled, they may make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

If the applicant feels that the decision of the Independent Appeal Panel is flawed on public law grounds, they may also apply for judicial review.

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