

Home to School Transport in the Royal Borough

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead provides some help and support with home to school transport.

This policy applies from September 20 and covers:

Home to school transport for children aged 4 to 16.

Home to school transport for children with special educational needs.

Home to school and college transport for young people aged 16 and over.

This booklet sets out:

The rules for deciding who gets help with transport.

How to apply for assistance.

What type of transport might be provided.

Special circumstances when more help may be available.



Welcome

Children and young people arriving at school or college in the morning will best achieve their potential if they are on time and ready to learn. For most families, this means that they make their own arrangements to get the child or young person to school or college.

Some children and young people can get help with their journey to and from school from the Royal Borough if they live more than a certain distance from their nearest school, or if they have special educational needs that mean that they can't safely walk to school. We provide this help in line with national guidelines and legislation, which means that some children and young people are eligible for free home to school transport. This guide sets out who is eligible for this help.

As a child gets older it is likely that they will start to travel more independently, walking to school or using the bus, perhaps with friends. This helps them to gain useful skills and confidence, equipping them for self-sufficiency as an adult. We are keen to foster this independence in the assistance we provide to children and young people who are eligible for free home to school transport.

Many families will be considering a new school for your child or young person to start in September 2020, and we encourage you to read this guide before making an application for a place.



Cllr Stuart Carroll

**Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social
Care, Children's Services, Health and
Mental Health**



Kevin McDaniel

Director of Children's Services

Introduction

The Royal Borough's home to school transport policy

1. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's home to school transport policy sets out what help and support we give to children and young people who are travelling between home and school/college. The policy covers the assistance available for:
 - Children of statutory school age (aged 5 to 16).
 - Children of statutory school age (aged 5 to 16) with special educational needs, a disability or other mobility difficulties.
 - Young people aged 16 to 18.
 - Young people aged 16 to 18 with special educational needs, a disability or other mobility difficulty.
 - Young people aged 19 to 25 with high needs.

Who does this policy apply to?

2. This policy applies to children and young people in school or college from September 2020 who are residents of the Royal Borough and attending a school or college¹. Children and young people who are not resident in the Royal Borough but attending a school/college in the borough will need to contact their home local authority.

Changes to the policy

3. Any changes are listed, for reference, in Section K, Changes to the policy from 2019, starting on page .

Definitions

4. When a word or phrase is underlined and in blue, this means the full definition of that word/phrase is set out in Section M, *Definitions*, starting on page 62 . If you are viewing an electronic version of this document you should be able to click on the phrase to take you to the definition.

Responsibility for the policy

5. Overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Head of Schools and Educational Services.

Responsibility for administering this policy lies with the School Transport Team, which since 1 August 2017 has been part of Achieving for Children, a Social Enterprise Company owned by The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. Achieving for Children provides children's services to all three authorities.

Any questions or queries relating to this policy as a whole should be addressed to the Service Leader for School Support Services, Achieving for Children, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RF or by email at transport@achievingforchildren.org.uk.

¹ See Section M, *Definitions* starting on page 62 for the full definition of a school and a college in relation to this policy.

At a glance...

A child may be eligible for free home to school transport if:

He or she is **4** to **8** years old...

...attending the nearest appropriate school...

...and lives more than **2** miles from the school.

See pages to for further details

He or she is **8** to **16** years old...

...attending the nearest appropriate school...

...and lives more than **3** miles from the school.

See pages to for further details

There is additional eligibility for 8 to 16 year olds from low income families.

See pages to for further details

A child with SEN may be eligible for free home to school transport if:

He or she is **4** to **8** years old...

...attending the nearest appropriate school...

...and lives less than **2** miles from the school...

...but has a special educational need that means they can't walk that distance to school.

See pages to for further details

He or she is **8** to **16** years old...

...attending the nearest appropriate school...

...and lives less than **3** miles from the school...

...but has a special educational need that means they can't walk that distance to school.

See pages to for further details

There is no free home to school transport for young people aged 16+, except:

He or she is aged
16 to 18 years
old...

...attending
the nearest
appropriate
school or
college...

...is from a low
income
family...

...and has a
special
educational
need that
means they
can't walk or
use public
transport to
get there.

See pages to
for further details

Special circumstances

See pages to

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A. Standard eligibility for transport

This section relates to the eligibility for free home to school transport for children aged 4 to 16, including those on low income.

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Policy 1 and Policy 2: Standard eligibility

These [free home to school transport](#) policies apply to children aged 4 to 16, resident in the Royal Borough.

POLICY 1. General home to school transport eligibility

Your child is eligible for free home to school transport if they meet the three criteria below:

P O L I C Y 1 a		Age	They are aged 4 to 8 years old (normally in National Curriculum Years R to 3).
	and	School	They attend the nearest appropriate school .
	and	Distance	They live more than 2 miles from the school, by the shortest safe walking route .

OR

P O L I C Y 1 b		Age	They are aged 8 to 16 years old (normally in National Curriculum Years 4 to 11).
	and	School	They attend the nearest appropriate school .
	and	Distance	They live more than 3 miles from the school, by the shortest safe walking route .

POLICY 2. Eligibility for low income families

Children from low income families will also be eligible for free home to school transport if they meet the three criteria below:

P O L I C Y 2 a		Age	They are aged 8 to 11 years old (normally in National Curriculum Years 4 to 6).
	and	School	They attend the nearest appropriate school .
	and	Distance	They live more than 2 miles from the school, by the shortest safe walking route .

OR

P O L		Age	They are aged 11 to 16 years old (normally in National Curriculum Years 7 to 11).
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I C Y 2 b	<i>and</i>	School	They attend one of the three nearest appropriate schools .
	<i>and</i>	Distance	They live between 2 and 6 miles from the school, by the shortest road route .

OR

P O L I C Y 2 c	Age		They are aged 11 to 16 years old (normally in National Curriculum Years 7 to 11).
	<i>and</i>	School	They attend their nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief.
	<i>and</i>	Distance	They live between 2 and 15 miles from the school, by the shortest road route .

Low income families

Low income families are those where the parents get the maximum Working Tax Credit or the child is entitled to free school meals.

More details about the standard eligibility

This section sets out more details about how Policy 1 and Policy 2 are applied to decide which children aged 4 to 16 and resident in the borough are eligible for [free home to school transport](#). Where a word or phrase is [underlined and in blue](#), you can find a more detailed definition in Section M, *Definitions*, starting on page 62).

Parental responsibility

6. It is responsibility of [parents/carers](#) to ensure that their child attends school². In most cases, this means that they will make their own arrangements for getting the child to and from school.
7. If parents/carers believe that their child might be eligible for free home to school transport, it is their responsibility to make any application needed (see Section I, *Making an application for transport*, starting on page 64).
8. Parents/carers are reminded that free home to school transport is provided to meet the needs of the child, not the parents/carers. So, for example, difficulty in getting a child to school because of work commitments will not make that child eligible for assistance with home to school transport.

Home to school distance and safe walking routes

9. The home to school distance is measured along the shortest [safe walking route](#), from the [home address](#) to the [school](#) or [college](#). If there is no safe walking route for an accompanied child to their [nearest appropriate school](#) then free home to school transport will be provided if requested.

Age and National Curriculum Year Groups

10. The policy outlines how eligibility for free home to school transport changes, according to age, as a child gets older. For the purposes of the policy, that change of age will be regarded as taking effect from the start of the academic year immediately following the academic year in which the child reached that age.
11. If a child is being taught outside the normal National Curriculum Year group for their age, they will still be considered for home to school transport according to their age, not their year group.

Designated area schools

12. Most schools in the [Royal Borough](#) prioritise children for places if they live in the school's [designated area](#). In some cases, a child's designated area school may not be their closest school. If, however, the designated area school is farther than the [statutory distance](#) then the child will be eligible for free home to school transport to the designated area school. The child will also be eligible for free home to school transport to the closer school, if that is also farther than the statutory distance.

Home to school transport for four year olds and under

13. Where a child is aged 4 years old or under there is no [statutory](#) entitlement to free home to school transport. Most children in the Royal Borough, however, start primary school in a Reception class aged 4 and so we consider applications for home to school transport for these children as if they were 5 years old. The Royal Borough will not generally provide free home to school transport to or from nursery schools or any other early years settings, except in exceptional circumstances (see Section E,

² Section 7, Education Act 1996.

Further assistance with transport, starting on page for details about when the borough might offer assistance in exceptional circumstances).

Lack of places at the nearest appropriate school

14. If it is not possible to offer a place at the [nearest appropriate school](#) then free home to school transport will normally be provided to the next nearest appropriate school with places, provided that it is farther than the statutory distance. The parents/carers will need to provide evidence that the more distant school is the nearest appropriate school with places available. This may be checked with the Royal Borough's School Admissions Team. The parents/carers may also be requested to lodge an admissions appeal for a place at the nearer school, with free home to school transport only being offered if the appeal is unsuccessful.
15. Parents/carers should note that siblings will only qualify for [free home to school transport](#) to that same more distant school if they also meet the criteria in the policy.

Review of home to school transport arrangements

16. The child will usually remain eligible for free home to school transport to the school until:
 - They reach one of the age thresholds for eligibility, and are no longer eligible on distance.
 - They leave the school.
 - They move to a new address.
17. The Royal Borough reserves the right to review the eligibility of any child receiving free home to school transport at any time. Eligibility may change if a place becomes available at a school closer than the one the child attends.

Low income families

18. Where free home to school transport is given to children from [low income families](#) under Policy 2, parents/carers will be asked to re-apply for transport each year, confirming each time that they receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit or that the child receives free school meals. If free home to school transport is given part-way through the year, then the parents/carers will be asked to re-apply in time for the start of the following academic year. Assistance under Policy 2 will only be granted or renewed once that evidence is received by the Royal Borough.

Siblings

19. A separate application for home to school transport is required for each child living at an address, and each application will be considered separately by the Royal Borough. If free home to school transport is provided for one child living at a particular address, it does not necessarily mean that any of that child's [siblings](#), or any other child living at that address, will also get assistance.
20. If the Royal Borough's home to school transport policy has changed since an older sibling received assistance, the younger sibling(s) will be subject to the new policy, which may include some transitional arrangements. Following changes to the borough's home to school transport policy from September 2017, a temporary exception is set out to this rule:
 - Siblings of children receiving free home to school transport, on 1st September 2017, to a middle school that is more than three miles away but is not the nearest with places will also be eligible for this assistance until they themselves leave the school at the end of Year 8 or they move to a new address.

Attendance at a residential school

21. Some children will be attending a residential (boarding) [school](#) as their [nearest appropriate school](#) and will not require home to school transport at the normal start and end of the school day. If the child is eligible for [free home to school transport](#) and home to school transport is requested, parents/carers will be encouraged to transport the child themselves, e.g. using a Personal Transport Budget (see Section G, *Types of home to school transport*, starting on page). If the borough directly provides transport then this will match the young person's boarding arrangements. For more details about how this will work in practice, please see paragraphs 192 to 196.
22. The Royal Borough recognises that there will be some circumstances in which it would be unreasonable not to provide free home to school transport, even where a child is not eligible under Policy 1 or 2. Please see Section E, *Further assistance with transport* on page for more details.

Children living in Holyport village

23. For children living in Holyport village, transport will be provided to Cox Green School as agreed by the leader of the council, Cllr Simon Dudley and Cllr Natasha Airey, cabinet member for children's services, in September 2017. This is in addition to the standard criteria in policies 1 and 2.
24. For the purposes of this exception, Holyport village is defined as the area within the Holyport ward of Bray parish.

B. SEN eligibility for transport

This section relates to the eligibility for free home to school transport for children aged 4 to 16, including with special educational needs.

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Policy 3: SEN Eligibility

These [free home to school transport](#) policies apply to children aged 4 to 16, resident in the Royal Borough, and who have an [Education, Health and Care Plan \(EHCP\)](#)³ or a [Statement of Special Educational Needs](#)⁴.

SEN eligibility

There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school transport for children who have an EHCP or statement.

POLICY 3. Further eligibility for EHCP/statemented children

Your child is eligible for free home to school transport if they meet the four criteria below:

P O L I C Y 3 a		Age	They are aged 4 to 8 years old (normally in National Curriculum Years R to 3).
	and	School	They attend the nearest appropriate school .
	and	Distance	They live 2 miles or <i>less</i> from that school, by the shortest safe walking route .
	And	Need	They have a special educational need, disability or mobility issue that means that they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to that school.

OR

P O L I C Y 3 b		Age	They are aged 8 to 16 years old (normally in National Curriculum Years 4 to 11).
	and	School	They attend the nearest appropriate school .
	and	Distance	They live 3 miles or <i>less</i> from that school, by the shortest safe walking route .
	And	Need	They have a special educational need, disability or mobility issue that means that they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to that school.

In addition, children with EHCPs/statements may be eligible anyway for free home to school transport under the following policies:

POLICY 1. General home to school transport eligibility

See page for more details about this eligibility.

POLICY 2. Eligibility for low income families

See page for more details about this eligibility.

³ Part 3, The Children and Families Act 2014.

⁴ s.324 of the Education Act 1996.

More details about the SEN eligibility

This section sets out more details about how Policy 3 is applied to decide which children aged 4 to 16, resident in the borough and with an [Education, Health and Care Plan](#) or [statement of Special Educational Needs](#) are eligible for [free home to school transport](#). Where a word or phrase is [underlined and in blue](#), you can find a more detailed definition in Section M, *Definitions*, starting on page 62 .

Parental responsibility

25. It is responsibility of [parents/carers](#) to ensure that their child attends school⁵. In most cases, this means that they will make their own arrangements for getting the child to and from school.
26. If parents/carers believe that their child might be eligible for free home to school transport, it is their responsibility to make any application needed (see Section I, *Making an application for transport*, starting on page), although this will also be considered through a child's assessment for an EHCP (see paragraph 33 to 35).

Eligibility under Policy 1 or Policy 2

27. Many children with an EHCP or statement will be eligible for free home to school transport under the general eligibility criteria (Policy 1), because they live farther than the [statutory distance](#) from their [nearest appropriate school](#). Alternatively, they may be from a low income family and qualify for free home to school transport under the low income criteria set out in Policy 2. Parents/carers are advised, therefore, to also read Section A, *Standard eligibility for transport*, starting on page .

Nearest appropriate school

28. Some children with an EHCP or statement will attend [mainstream](#) schools, whilst others will attend [schools](#) specifically for children with special educational needs. In each case the school will be identified in the child's EHCP or statement. If this school is also the nearest school to the home address of the child that could, in the Royal Borough's view, meet the needs of the child then this will be considered the [nearest appropriate school](#) for the purposes of this policy. See also paragraphs 99 to 101.

Home to school distance and safe walking routes

29. The home to school distance is measured along the shortest [safe walking route](#), from the [home address](#) to the [school](#) or [college](#). If there is no safe walking route for an accompanied child to their nearest appropriate school then free home to school transport will be provided if requested.
30. Children with an EHCP or statement may be able to use a walking route safely, and so there is no automatic right of free home to school transport for children with special educational needs, disabilities or mobility issues. Many children, including some with severe needs, but more usually those with mild or moderate needs, will not need assistance with home to school transport. In these cases, the Royal Borough expects that parents/carers will make their own arrangements to get their children to school.

⁵ Section 7, Education Act 1996.

31. In some cases, a child with an EHCP or statement may not be able to use a walking route safely, even if accompanied, if, for instance, they:
- Are, on a long-term basis, physically unable to move around independently, due to:
 - A disability such as severe cerebral palsy that requires daily use of significant mobility aids (e.g. a wheelchair).
 - A disability such as severe visual impairment.
 - A medical condition such as juvenile arthritis resulting in severe persistent pain and/or extreme fatigue.
 - A medical condition such as intractable epileptic seizure disorders that result in a serious persistent health and safety risk.
 - Have a lack of awareness of common dangers and a lack of age appropriate independence skills, due to:
 - Severely restricted communication skills, arising from, for example, profound hearing impairment, severe autism or severe language disorders.
 - Significant learning disabilities, where a child might be unable to assess risk and adapt to everyday situations. This might arise from severe learning difficulties, for example.
 - Severe difficulties with interpreting complex social situations or being unable to cope with unexpected change. An example might be a child with Asperger's Syndrome who has very little awareness of personal danger.
 - Severe behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties in comparison with other children of their age.
32. Where a child is unable to use a walking route safely, even accompanied, then [free home to school transport](#) will be provided if requested. This applies even if the distance to the school is equal to or less than the [statutory distance](#).
33. A long-term restriction on a child's ability to physically move around independently is something that is likely to last for at least a year, and perhaps for the rest of their life. It can include intermittent or sporadic conditions such as epilepsy or multiple sclerosis.

Assessment of need for free home to school transport

34. Where a child has special educational needs that cannot be met by funded SEN support within their educational setting, the Royal Borough will consider whether an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is needed. The Royal Borough's Children and Young People Disability Service (CYPDS) will carry out an assessment to decide whether an EHCP is needed. If one is needed, then an EHCP will be written and agreed, drawing on information gathered from the parents/carers and professionals. The agreed EHCP will identify a school that the child will attend⁶.

⁶ This is a much simplified summary of the process. You can find much more detail on the Royal Borough's Local Offer website here: <http://directory.rbwm.gov.uk/kb5/rbwm/directory/localoffer.page>.

35. In considering whether a child cannot use the walking route to school safely, the Royal Borough will have regard to the factors set out in paragraph 30.
36. If a child is agreed to be eligible for free home to school transport then the Royal Borough will also need to agree how the child will be transported to school (e.g. using a Personal Transport Budget or by train, bus, minibus or car). More information about this is set out in Section G, *Types of home to school transport*, starting on page .
37. Parents/carers are reminded that free home to school transport is provided to meet the needs of the child, not the parents/carers. So, for example, difficulty in getting a child to school because of work commitments will not make that child eligible for assistance with home to school transport.

Annual review of need for free home to school transport

38. All children with an EHCP have an annual review to check and monitor progress towards their outcomes and longer term aspirations. From September 2016 the annual review process will start to consider home to school transport arrangements. This review will include consideration of:
 - Whether a child is eligible for free home to school transport, in the light of any changing circumstances and the child's ongoing development.
 - Whether any transport currently provided still meets the child's needs.
 - Whether the child can move to another type of transport (e.g. from a taxi to a minibus).
 - Whether the parents/carers of an eligible child are interested in a Personal Transport Budget, and whether this is appropriate (see paragraphs 164 to 166).
 - Whether the parents/carers of an eligible child are interested in Independent Travel Training for the child and whether this is appropriate (see paragraphs 161 to 163).
39. The process for agreeing any changes to the EHCP following on from the annual review can take up to 14 weeks. This includes amendments to free home to school transport arrangements. Any changes to the child's home to school transport arrangements will be implemented at the start of the first school term that begins 14 weeks after the annual review date, or sooner, by mutual agreement.

Age and National Curriculum Year Groups

40. The policy outlines how eligibility for free home to school transport changes, according to age, as a child gets older. For the purposes of the policy, that change of age will be regarded as taking effect from the start of the academic year immediately following the academic year in which the child reached that age.
41. If a child is being taught outside the normal National Curriculum Year group for their age, they will still be considered for home to school transport according to their age, not their year group.

Home to school transport for four year olds and under

42. Where a child is aged 4 years old or under there is no [statutory](#) entitlement to free home to school transport. Most children in the Royal Borough, however, start primary school in a Reception class aged 4 and so we consider applications for home to school transport for these children as if they were 5 years old. The Royal Borough will not generally provide free home to school transport to or from nursery schools or any other early years settings except in exceptional circumstances (see Section E, *Further assistance with transport*, starting on page for details about when the borough might offer assistance in exceptional circumstances).

Siblings

43. A separate application for home to school transport is required for each child living at an address, and each application will be considered separately by the Royal Borough. If free home to school transport is provided for one child living at a particular address, it does not necessarily mean that any of that child's [siblings](#), or any other child living at that address, will also get assistance.
44. If the Royal Borough's home to school transport policy has changed since an older sibling received assistance, the younger sibling(s) will be subject to the new policy, which may include some transitional assistance.

Attendance at after-school clubs

45. After-school clubs can be a valuable experience for any young person. In the case of a child with an EHCP or statement, the Royal Borough will consider free transport home from one after-school club per week, where that the club directly contributes to the educational outcomes in the child's EHCP/statement. This transport will only be provided:
- If the child is eligible for free home to school transport.
 - From the child's main school to their home address.
 - After school. No transport assistance will be provided home from evening events.
 - On a weekday in term-time. No transport assistance will be provided for weekend events.
 - Home from one after-school club per week.
46. Transport home from additional after-school clubs, or from clubs that do not directly contribute to the educational outcomes in the child's EHCP, will be the responsibility of the parents/carers.

Attendance at a residential school

47. Some children will be attending a residential (boarding) [school](#) as their [nearest appropriate school](#) and will not require home to school transport at the normal start and end of the school day. If the child is eligible for [free home to school transport](#) and home to school transport is requested, parents/carers will be encouraged to transport the child themselves, e.g. using a Personal Transport Budget (see Section G, *Types of home to school transport*, starting on page). If the borough directly provides transport then this will match the young person's boarding arrangements. For more details about how this will work in practice, please see paragraphs 192 to 196.

Other circumstances

48. The Royal Borough recognises that there will be some circumstances in which it would be unreasonable not to provide free home to school transport under policies 1, 2 or 3, even where a child is not eligible under Policy 3. Please see Section E, *Further assistance with transport*, starting on page for more details.

C. Post-16 eligibility for transport

This section relates to the eligibility for assistance with home to school or college transport for young people aged 16+, including those with special educational needs.

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Policy 4, Policy 5 and Policy 6: Post-16 home to school transport

These policies apply to young people aged 16+ and resident in the Royal Borough.

POLICY 4. General post-16 transport eligibility

P O L I C Y 4		The Royal Borough does not provide free home to school/college transport for young people aged 16 and over. National Rail offer a 16-17 Saver Scheme, providing a discount on rail travel for 16-17 year old students. Further information can be found in Other assistance with post-16 home to school transport
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POLICY 5. SEN post-16 transport eligibility, low income only

P O L I C Y 5		The Royal Borough does not provide free home to school/college transport for young people aged 16 and over with an EHCP or statement, except where they qualify under the criteria below. National Rail offer a 16-17 Saver Scheme, providing a discount on rail travel for 16-17 year old students. Further information can be found in Other assistance with post-16 home to school transport
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Young people with an EHCP or statement are only eligible for free home to school transport if they meet the four criteria below:

P O L I C Y 5	Age	They are aged 16 to 18 years old (normally in National Curriculum Years 12 to 13), or are a ‘continuing student’ aged 19 or over.
	<i>and</i> School	They attend a school, college or other institution for education or training, and that is the nearest appropriate school , college or institution.
	<i>and</i> Need	They have a special educational need, disability or mobility issue that means that they cannot reasonably be expected to walk or take public transport to that school, college or institution.
	<i>and</i> Income	They are from a low income family .

Low income families	For post-16 eligibility, this means the young person qualifies for income support, and/or whose parents/carers qualify for income support or are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit.
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Policy 6: Transport for young people aged 19 to 25 with high needs

49. Young people aged 19 to 25 and with high needs may be eligible for assistance with transport if:
- They attend, on a full-time basis, an appropriate school or college offering the course being followed; are taking up an apprenticeship or are in part-time education or training when employed, self-employed or volunteering, and;
 - They meet [national eligibility criteria for access](#) to adult care and support and for access to carer support.

Participation in Education or Training Post-16

50. The Government has changed the law so that young people are expected to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday. This can mean:
- Full-time education, such as school, college or home education.
 - Work-based learning, such as an apprenticeship.
 - Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours per week.
51. Eligibility for free home to school transport nationally has not been extended upwards with these changes in the law.

More details about the post-16 eligibility

This section sets out more details about how Policy 4, Policy 5 and Policy 6 are applied to decide which young people aged 16 and over and resident in the borough are eligible for [free home to school transport](#). Where a word or phrase is [underlined and in blue](#), you can find a more detailed definition in Section M, *Definitions*, starting on 62 .

Parental responsibility

52. In most cases, this [parents/carers](#)/young people will make their own arrangements for getting the young person to and from [school](#) or [college](#).
53. If a parent/carer/young person believes that they might be eligible for free home to school transport, it is their responsibility to make any application needed (see Section I, *Making an application for transport*, starting on page).

Continuation of free home to school transport beyond 16

54. There is no automatic continuation of any free home to school transport arrangements for young people turning 16.
55. Young people without an [Education, Health and Care plan](#) (EHCP) or [statement](#) will not receive any free home to school transport beyond the end of the academic year in which they turn 16 (i.e. the end of national curriculum Year 11).
56. Young people with an EHCP or statement will only receive free home to school transport beyond the end of the academic year in which they turn 16 (i.e. the end of national curriculum Year 11) if:
- They are from a [low income family](#), and;
 - They are attending a school, college or other institution for education, that is the [nearest appropriate school](#), college or institution, and;
 - They have a special educational need, disability or mobility issue that means that they cannot reasonably be expected to walk or take public transport to that school, college or institution.
57. In addition, students with an EHCP or statement who are still attending a school or college at which they started their post-16 education or training before 1st September 2017 will continue to receive free home to school transport until they leave the school/college or their circumstances otherwise change.

Nearest appropriate school or college

58. Some young people with an EHCP or statement will attend mainstream schools, colleges or other institutions, whilst others will attend schools or colleges specifically for young people with special educational needs. In each case the school or college will be identified in the young person's EHCP or statement. If it is also the nearest one to the [home address](#) of the young person that could, in the Royal Borough's view, meet the needs of the young person then this will be considered the [nearest appropriate school](#) for the purposes of this policy. See also paragraphs 99 to 101 on page .

Reasonable expectations on ability to walk or take public transport to school or college

59. Young people with an EHCP or statement may be able to use a walking route safely, or use public transport to get to school or college. There is, therefore, no automatic right of free home to school transport for young people with special educational needs, disabilities or mobility issues, even from low income families. Many young people, including some with severe needs, but more usually those with mild or moderate needs will not need assistance with home to school transport. In these cases, the [Royal Borough](#) expects that parents/carers/young people will make their own arrangements to get their children to school or college.
60. In some cases, a young person with an EHCP cannot reasonably be expected to walk or take public transport to their school, college or institution if, for instance, they:
- Are, on a long-term basis, physically unable to move around independently, due to:
 - A disability such as severe cerebral palsy that requires daily use of significant mobility aids (e.g. a wheelchair).
 - A disability such as severe visual impairment.
 - A medical condition such as juvenile arthritis resulting in severe persistent pain and/or extreme fatigue.
 - A medical condition such as intractable epileptic seizure disorders that result in a serious persistent health and safety risk.
 - Have a lack of awareness of common dangers and a lack of age appropriate independence skills, due to:
 - Severely restricted communication skills, arising from, for example, profound hearing impairment, severe autism or severe language disorders.
 - Significant learning disabilities, where a child might be unable to assess risk and adapt to everyday situations. This might arise from severe learning difficulties, for example.
 - Severe difficulties with interpreting complex social situations or being unable to cope with unexpected change. An example might be a child with Asperger's Syndrome who has very little awareness of personal danger.
 - Severe behavioural, emotional and/or social difficulties in comparison with other children of their age.
61. A long-term restriction on a young person's ability to physically move around independently is something that is likely to last for at least a year, and perhaps for the rest of their life. It can include intermittent or sporadic conditions such as epilepsy or multiple sclerosis.

Assessment of need for free home to school transport

62. Most young people with special educational needs who require an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) aged 16 will already have one. There are more details about getting an EHCP for the first time, and the resulting assessment of transport needs, in paragraphs 33 to 35, on page .

Annual review of need for free home to school transport

63. All young people with an EHCP have an annual review to check and monitor progress towards their outcomes and longer term aspirations. From September 2016 the annual review process will start to consider home to school transport arrangements. For young people approaching 16, this review will include consideration of:
- Whether a young person is eligible for free home to school transport post-16, in light of the reduced eligibility, any changing circumstances and the young person's ongoing development.
 - Whether any transport currently provided still meets the young person's needs.
 - Whether the young person can move to another type of transport (e.g. from a taxi to a minibus).
 - Whether the parents/carers of an eligible young person are interested in a Personal Transport Budget, and whether this is appropriate (see paragraphs 164 to 166).
 - Whether the parents/carers of an eligible child are interested in Independent Travel Training for the young person and whether this is appropriate (see paragraphs 161 to 163).
64. The process for agreeing any changes to the EHCP following on from the annual review can take up to 14 weeks. This includes amendments to free home to school transport arrangements. Any changes to the young person's home to school arrangements will be implemented at the start of their post-16 education.
65. The young person's annual reviews will continue throughout their post-16 education and these will include ongoing consideration of the home to school transport arrangements.

Age and National Curriculum Year Groups

66. The policy outlines how eligibility for free home to school transport changes, according to age, as a young person gets older. For the purposes of the policy, that change of age will be regarded as taking effect from the start of the academic year immediately following the academic year in which the young person reached that age.
67. If a young person is being taught outside the normal National Curriculum Year group for their age, they will still be considered for home to school transport according to their age, not their year group.

Siblings

68. A separate application for home to school transport is required for each young person living at an address, and each application will be considered separately by the Royal Borough. If free home to school transport is provided for one young person living at a particular address, it does not necessarily mean that any of that young person's [siblings](#), or any other young person living at that address, will also get assistance.
69. If the Royal Borough's home to school transport policy has changed since an older sibling received assistance, the younger sibling(s) will be subject to the new policy, which may include some transitional assistance.

Attendance at after-school clubs

70. After-school clubs can be a valuable experience for any young person. In the case of a child with an EHCP or statement, the Royal Borough will consider free transport home from one after-school club per week, where that the club directly contributes to the educational outcomes in the child's EHCP/statement. This transport will only be provided:
- If the child is eligible for free home to school transport.
 - From the child's main school to their home address.
 - After school. No transport assistance will be provided home from evening events.
 - On a weekday in term-time. No transport assistance will be provided for weekend events.
 - Home from one after-school club per week.
71. Transport home from additional after-school clubs, or from clubs that do not directly contribute to the educational outcomes in the child's EHCP, will be the responsibility of the parents/carers

Attendance at a residential school

72. Some young people will be attending a residential (boarding) [school](#) as their [nearest appropriate school](#) and will not require home to school transport at the normal start and end of the school day. If the young person is eligible for [free home to school transport](#) under the policy set out in this section, and home to school transport is requested, parents/carers will be encouraged to transport the young person themselves, e.g. using a Personal Transport Budget. If the borough directly provides transport then this will match the young person's boarding arrangements. For more details about how this will work in practice, please see paragraphs 192 on 196.

Assistance for young people aged 19 and over with high needs

73. In some circumstances a young person with high needs may be continuing their education past the age of 19, and may qualify for assistance with home to school transport. For more details about this, the parents/carers should make an application in the usual way.

Other circumstances

74. The Royal Borough recognises that there will be some circumstances in which it would be unreasonable not to provide free home to school transport, even where a young person is not eligible under Policy 4, 5 or 6. Please see Section E, *Further assistance with transport*, starting on page for more details about when extenuating circumstances might justify the provision of free home to school transport.

Other assistance with post-16 home to school transport

This section sets out what other assistance with home to school transport may be available to young people, including those with [Education, Health and Care Plans](#) or a [statement](#), attending education or training post-16 and resident in the borough.

75. National Rail 16-17 Saver Card National Rail offers the 16-17 Saver Card to all young adults, valid until their 18th birthday (season tickets purchased using the 16-17 Saver Card may still be valid for a period after the 18th birthday). The 16-17 Saver Card offers holders a 50% discount on all standard Anytime, Off-peak, Advance and Season tickets and can be used for travel to and from school or college, as well as for leisure purposes. The card costs £30 a year, further information can be found on their website at <https://www.16-17saver.co.uk/>

Free bus passes for disabled people

76. Free bus passes are available, nationally, to all disabled people (including students) who meet the criteria⁷. Eligible persons are those who:

- Are blind or partially sighted.
- Are profoundly or severely deaf.
- Are without speech.
- Have a disability or injury with substantial and long-term adverse effects on the ability to walk.
- Do not have arms, or have a long-term loss of the use of both arms.
- Have a learning disability that includes significant impairment of intelligence/social functioning.
- Would have an application to drive a motor vehicle refused due to their disability.

77. Many young people with an EHCP or statement will meet these criteria, but not all will.

78. More details about how to apply for a disabled person's bus pass can be found in Section I, *Making an application for transport*, starting on page .

16 to 19 Bursaries

79. Young people in education or training can apply for a bursary from their [school](#), [college](#) or institution for financial support to help them remain in education. There are two types of bursary:

- A vulnerable person's bursary, is for up to £1,200 per year and available to young people in specific vulnerable groups.
- A discretionary bursary that schools, colleges and institutions award to meet individual needs, including help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

80. Although schools, colleges and institutions (but not the Royal Borough) are responsible for managing both types of bursary, the government sets out guidance about how these bursaries should work. You can find the guidance online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund> Young Parents / Care to Learn

⁷ As set out in the Transport Act 2000.

81. Young parents under 20 may be eligible for financial assistance with childcare and related travel costs while they are learning. Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- Childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- A childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days)
- Keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- Taking your child to the childcare provider

82. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

D. When transport is not provided

This section sets out when [free home to school transport](#) will not normally be provided, and applies to all home to school transport policies.

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No application form

83. It is the responsibility of [parents/carers](#) to make an application for home to school transport. Except for a child or young person in care, the Royal Borough will not consider eligibility for home to school transport unless an application is made. For children and young people with an [Education, Health and Care Plan](#) (EHCP) or [statement](#), that application may be made during the initial assessment for the EHCP or as part of the annual review process.

When transport is not provided

To addresses other than the home address

84. The Royal Borough will not provide [free home to school transport](#) to or from any address other than the child or young person's main [home address](#).

When the child changes home address and/or school

85. If a child or young person changes address and [school](#) or [college](#) then their eligibility for free home to school transport will be re-assessed on the basis of the standard policies set out in Section A, *Standard eligibility for transport*, starting on page , Section B, *SEN eligibility for transport*, starting on page and Section C, *Post-16 eligibility for transport*, starting on page . This may well mean that the child or young person is no longer eligible for free home to school transport.
86. If a child or young person changes address, the Royal Borough will not provide free home to school transport in order to maintain a place at that their current school. The child or young person will be re-assessed on the basis of the standard policies set out in Sections A, B and C. This may well mean that the child or young person is no longer eligible for free home to school transport.
87. If a child or young person moves into an address in a different local authority area, then the Royal Borough will cease to provide free home to school transport. The parents/carers/young person should contact their new local authority for further assistance.
88. If a child or young person is withdrawn from one school or college and placed in another by their parents/carers, then their eligibility for free home to school transport to the new school or college will be re-assessed on the basis of the standard policies set out in Sections A, B and C. Where there is no change of address, it is likely that the child or young person will no longer be eligible for free home to school transport because the [nearest appropriate school](#) would still be the original school where the child or young person had a place.
89. The Royal Borough may offer to move the child or young person to a nearer suitable school with places, bearing in mind any special circumstances, such as examinations and length of time in current school. This could mean that the child or young person is no longer eligible for free home to school transport.

To meet parental preference

90. If parents/carers choose a school, college or other institution for their child that is not the nearest appropriate school with places (or for those on a low income, not one of their 3 nearest appropriate schools/nearest preferred school on the grounds of religion or belief with places for those aged 11-16) to the home address, then the Royal Borough will not provide free home to school transport.

91. If parents/carers of a child or young person with an EHCP or statement choose a school or college that meets the needs of their child but is not, in the Royal Borough's view, the closest school or college to the home address that could do so, then the Royal Borough will not provide free home to school transport.
92. When considering a place at a school that is not the nearest appropriate school, parents/carers are strongly advised to consider whether they will be able to provide/pay for transport themselves to that school for the whole duration of their child's attendance at that school. This includes places at schools, colleges or other institutions for post-16 education.

To enable attendance at a particular school on specific grounds

93. The Royal Borough will not take the following into account when identifying the nearest appropriate school or college to a child or young person's home address:
 - Religious or philosophical beliefs (or lack of), except in one specific circumstance, where a child is from a low income family, as set out in Policy 2c in Section A, *Standard eligibility for transport*, starting on page .
 - Preference for single-sex or co-educational education. A girls' school will not, however, be considered the nearest appropriate school for a boy or vice versa.
 - Preference for selective education.
 - Preference for a residential school.

Outside the normal start and finish to the school day

94. Free home to school transport will only be provided at the normal start and end of the school day. Transport at other times will remain a parental responsibility, including where a child or young person is:
 - Attending extra-curricular activities, including after-school sports or non-sports clubs and societies.
 - Starting school late or finishing school early to attend dental, hospital or other appointments.
 - Unwell, and has to be collected from school early.
 - In detention.
95. Transport may be arranged at times other than the normal start and end of the school day for a child or young person eligible for free home to school transport if:
 - A permanently excluded child or young person is attending a Pupil Referral Unit for only part of the school day (see paragraph 119).
 - A child or young person with an EHCP or statement is attending an after-school club (see paragraphs 44 and 45).
 - A child or young person is attending a residential school (see paragraphs 20 or 46 or 71).

To locations other than the main school

96. The Royal Borough will not generally provide free home to school transport to or from any address other than the child's or young person's main school or college. Transport to and from other locations will remain a parental responsibility or, in some circumstances, the responsibility of the school. This includes where a child or young person is:
- Attending lessons or other activities at another school during the school day. The organising school or institution will be responsible for these transport arrangements.
 - Where a school has outsourced part or all of its education to another provider located at a different site.
 - Attending work experience.
 - Accompanying a friend home.
97. Free home to school transport may be provided to more than one school if a permanently excluded child or young person, or a child or young person at risk of permanent exclusion, is dually registered (i.e. attends more than one school or Pupil Referral Unit). Free home to school transport will only be offered, however, to those schools that are farther than the statutory distance (see paragraph 119).

To nursery schools and pre-school settings

98. The Royal Borough will not generally provide free home to school transport to or from nursery schools or any other early years settings except in exceptional circumstances. In those cases, the eligibility of the child for free home to school transport will be considered as if the child was 5 years old.

To enable education other than at school

99. A small number of children and young people receive their education outside schools. If parents/carers decide to educate their child other than at school (e.g. at home) then no free home to school transport will be provided by the Royal Borough. If the Royal Borough has arranged for a child or young person to be educated other than at school, then free home to school transport may be provided (see paragraph 126).

E. Further assistance with transport

This section sets out how the Royal Borough may offer [free home to school transport](#) even if a child or young person is not eligible under the standard policies set out in Section A, *Standard eligibility for transport*, starting on page , Section B, *SEN eligibility for transport*, starting on page and Section C, *Post-16 eligibility for transport*, starting on page 15 .

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Discretion in providing free home to school transport

100. The Royal Borough recognises that there may be additional circumstances which should be taken into account when assessing eligibility for free home to school transport, even where a child or young person is not eligible under the policies set out in policies 1 to 5. [Parents/carers](#) and young people are able, therefore, to point out individual or extenuating circumstances.
101. The list below is not exhaustive, and there will be other circumstances in which the Royal Borough may agree to provide free home to school transport. Please note, however, that individual family work commitments, childcare arrangements and/or inconvenience to parents/carers is not normally taken into account when considering eligibility for travel assistance.
102. Where the Royal Borough does agree to provide free home to school transport, this is not to be taken as a precedent for any other child or young person, including a sibling of that child or young person.

When further assistance may be provided

Children in Care/Looked After Children

103. Where a child is placed in foster care for a temporary period, the Royal Borough will provide free home to school transport to the child's current [school](#) to enable them to continue to attend, if:
- That school is farther than the [statutory distance](#) from the temporary address.
 - The foster carer can demonstrate that they cannot reasonably be expected to transport the child or young person to and from that school.
104. Where a young person aged 16 or above is placed in foster care for a temporary period, the Royal Borough will provide free home to school transport to the young person's current school or [college](#) to enable them to continue to attend, if:
- They have a special education need, disability or mobility issue that means they cannot reasonably be expected to walk or take public transport to the school or college.
 - The foster carer can demonstrate that they cannot reasonably be expected to transport the child or young person to and from that school.
105. This assistance will be provided for a period of up to 24 weeks. If the above criteria are not met, then the arrangements for transport will fall to the foster carer.

Children with temporary medical problems

106. The Royal Borough will consider applications for free home to school transport where a child is attending their [nearest appropriate school](#) but lives at or under the statutory distance away and is unable to walk to it because of a medical condition. Any free home to school transport agreed would be for a fixed period, dependent on the medical need identified.
107. Applications will need to be supported by appropriate evidence (provided at the parents/carers cost).
108. This additional assistance will not usually be available to young people aged 16 and over and in post-16 education unless the medical problem results in a physical or mental impairment with a

substantial and long-term adverse effect on the young person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities⁸.

Children and young people with a disability

109. Where a child or young person has a disability that results in a physical or mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the young person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities⁹, reasonable adjustments will be made, in applying this policy.

Children and young people excluded from school or at risk of permanent exclusion

110. If a child attends a Pupil Referral Unit or similar establishment because the child has been permanently excluded from their main school or college, then the unit will be considered to be their [nearest appropriate school](#). If the unit is farther than the [statutory distance](#) from the [home address](#) then the child will be eligible for [free home to school transport](#).
111. If a child is dually registered, i.e. attends more than one school, Pupil Referral Unit or similar establishment, either because they have been permanently excluded or because they are at risk of permanent exclusion, then both schools will be regarded as their nearest appropriate school. The child will receive free home to school transport to and from however many of the schools are more than the statutory distance from the home address.
112. In exceptional circumstances, permanently excluded children who are eligible for free home to school transport may also be provided with transport at times other than the normal start and finish of the school day, if a child is attending the unit for only part of the school day.
113. Young people aged 16 and over and excluded from school or college are not eligible for free home to school transport to a Pupil Referral Unit or similar establishment, unless they have a EHCP or statement, are from a low income family and have a special education need, disability or mobility issue that means they cannot reasonably be expected to walk or take public transport to the Pupil Referral Unit or similar establishment.

Children placed in a school under the Fair Access Protocol

114. The Royal Borough operates a [Fair Access Protocol](#) to ensure that children without a school place, especially the most vulnerable, can be found and offered a place quickly. This includes children excluded from school and children moving into an area where there are no school places available.
115. Where a child has been placed in a school under the Fair Access Protocol, that school will be considered the nearest appropriate school. If that school is more than the statutory distance from the home address then free home to school transport will be offered.
116. The Fair Access Protocol does not apply to young people aged 16 and over.

Children and young people educated other than at school

117. A small number of children receive their education outside school or college. If the Royal Borough has arranged for a child to receive education other than at school then that provision will be considered to be the nearest appropriate school. The child will receive free home to school transport if the provision is more than the statutory distance from the home address.

⁸ As defined in Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

⁹ As defined in Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

118. Young people aged 16 and over are not eligible for free home to school transport to any 'Education other than at school' provision.

Children and young people in temporary residential circumstances

119. If a child is forced to relocate temporarily due to alternative accommodation due to circumstances outside their control, the Royal Borough may provide short-term free home to school transport if the school is more than the statutory distance from the home address. The distance criteria may be waived if the child is accommodated in a refuge, and whose safety would otherwise be at risk. Any temporary arrangements made would be subject to regular, and at least termly, review.

120. No provision will be made for young people aged 16 and over in these circumstances unless they have an [EHCP](#) or [statement](#), are from a [low income family](#) and have a special education need, disability or mobility issue that means they cannot reasonably be expected to walk or take public transport to their school or college.

121. This assistance will be provided for a period of up to 24 weeks.

Parents/carers with a disability or illness

122. If a child is attending their nearest appropriate school and lives [at or under](#) the statutory distance from the school then the Royal Borough may provide free home to school transport if no [parent/carer](#) is able to accompany the child on the walk to school because of a medical condition or disability. Evidence of this need must be provided.

123. It is expected that the parents/carers will have made every effort to secure other help, including (but not limited to):

- Assistance from immediate and extended family members, friends and neighbours.
- Assistance via the school's own School Travel Plan (e.g. a walking bus).

124. The Royal Borough may seek confirmation of this from the parents/carers, school or other agencies, and may also consider whether any disability benefits received could be used to help with home to school transport. Any arrangements made would be subject to regular, and at least termly, review.

125. No provision will be made for young people aged 16 and over in these circumstances unless they have an EHCP or statement, are from a low income family and have a special education need, disability or mobility issue that means they cannot reasonably be expected to walk or take public transport to their school or college.

F. Concessionary Fare Paying Scheme

This section sets out when parents/carers/young people can buy an annual pass for a spare seat on an operating Royal Borough home to school transport route, when they are not otherwise eligible for [free home to school transport](#).

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Details of the concessionary fare paying scheme

The concessionary fare paying scheme

126. The concessionary fare paying scheme allows parents/carers/young people to buy an annual pass for a spare seat on an operating Royal Borough home to school transport route, when they are not otherwise eligible for [free home to school transport](#).

Eligibility for the concessionary fare paying scheme

127. A child or young person aged 4 to 19 can buy a pass for a seat on a home to school transport route if they:

- Are not already eligible for free home to school transport, and;
- Are seeking places on a route that has been contracted by the Royal Borough for home to school transport, and;
- Are seeking places on a route that has spare seats, once all children or young people eligible for free home to school transport have a place, and
- Are attending a school or college to which the home to school transport route already goes.

128. Concessionary seats can be bought for children and young people who live inside or outside the borough (at a slightly higher cost for non-borough residents).

129. Concessionary seats cannot be bought on local public transport. Concessionary seats also cannot be bought on routes contracted by the Royal Borough for children with an [Education, Health and Care Plan](#) or [statement](#) unless the Royal Borough's Children and Young People Disability Service (CYPDS) agrees that it would be appropriate.

130. Places are usually offered on a first come, first served basis. If there are more applications for concessionary places than there are seats available, then seats will be allocated on in the following priority order:

- Children aged 4 to 8 (normally in national curriculum years R to 3).
- Children aged 8 to 16 (normally in national curriculum years 4 to 11).
- Young people aged 16 to 19 (normally in national curriculum years 12 and 13).

131. If there are still more applicants than places then priority will be given to the applicant(s) with the shortest distance between their home address and their nearest current pick-up point on the route, measured along the [safe walking route](#).

Cost of concessionary fare paying seats

132. The cost of concessionary fare paying seats for applicants is set out in the Royal Borough's Fees and Charges document. This is updated by the full Council annually, and the charges for the 2019/20 academic year have now been set:

- | | |
|--|------|
| ● Annual concessionary ticket for Royal Borough resident | £639 |
| ● Annual concessionary ticket for non-Royal Borough resident | £893 |
| ● Annual concessionary ticket for the M10 and M11 Eton Wick to Windsor service | £336 |

133. These were agreed by Council on 25 February 2020.

134. The average actual cost to the local authority of a concessionary fare paying seat for a school year is:

- For children without SEN £1,110
- For children with SEN £6,201

135. The cost of the concessionary seats will be waived for children and young people from [low income families that are resident within the Royal Borough](#).

Withdrawal of concessionary fare paying seats

136. The Royal Borough reserves the right to withdraw a concessionary seat at any time. This will usually be because a seat is needed for a child or young person who is eligible for free home to school transport, or because the vehicle is being replaced by a smaller vehicle. There may be other reasons.
137. The Royal Borough will try to give as much notice as possible, with a minimum of 7 calendar days. Notice can be given during term time or school holiday time, by letter sent by post to the parents/carers last known address. Payment for the concessionary seat will be adjusted to reflect the actual time the child or young person has used the seat, and refunds issued on a pro-rata basis.
138. Parents/carers and young people are advised, therefore, not to rely on the availability of a concessionary seat when considering home to school transport arrangements. In addition, the offer of a concessionary seat does not set a precedent for the future provision of home to school transport for the child or young person, their address or their circumstances.

Using concessionary fare paying seats

139. Children and young people using concessionary seats will be expected to use existing stops and routes. The Royal Borough is under no obligation to provide extra or larger vehicles to maintain or create concessionary seats.

Refunds

140. If a young person no longer requires the concessionary fare paying seat or it is withdrawn for any reason then a refund will be issued. Refunds are calculated on the number of remaining days the fare paying seat is valid on.

G. Types of home to school transport

This section sets out the types of home to school transport that may be provided to meet the Royal Borough's duty to provide [free home to school transport](#).

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Providing the appropriate home to school transport

Providing appropriate home to school transport

141. When a child or young person is eligible for [free home to school transport](#), the [Royal Borough](#) will consider the most appropriate home to school transport assistance, taking into account the child's individual needs and cost effectiveness. The transport will be designed to allow the child to travel in reasonable safety and in reasonable comfort. As children get older, more priority will be given to transport arrangements that help develop independent travel, so that they are better equipped to lead independent lives.

Types of home to school transport available

142. The types of assistance offered can be divided into three main groups, and it is generally expected that the assistance given to a child or young person will be in one of the first two groups below:

- Independent travel, including:
 - Personal Transport Budget for the parents/carers.
 - Mileage allowance for the parents/carers.
 - Independent Travel Training for the child or young person.
- Travel on Public Transport, including:
 - Travel pass for use on public transport (bus or train).
 - Travel pass for use on public transport (bus or train) for both child and a parent/carer.
- Travel in a vehicle on a route that the Royal Borough has arranged, including:
 - A shared vehicle (e.g. coach or minibus) to a drop-off point.
 - A shared vehicle (e.g. a coach or minibus) door to door.
 - An individual vehicle (e.g. a car) to a drop-off point.
 - An individual vehicle (e.g. a car) door to door.

143. Travel in a vehicle on a route that the Royal Borough has arranged (contracted) may include a Passenger Assistant (i.e. an escort). See paragraphs 200 to 210 for more details.

Transport to meet the needs of the child or young person

144. Most children and young people who are eligible for home to school transport will be issued with a travel pass for use on public transport (bus and/or train). This ensures that free home to school transport is delivered as cost-effectively as possible, whilst also helping children and young people to develop travel independence skills as they get older.

145. Where there are no public transport routes available, an eligible child or young person may be provided with a place on a shared vehicle, usually a coach or minibus.

146. Alternatively, a mileage allowance may be given to the parents/carers to cover the cost of driving the child or young person to and from school. From 2016/17, the Royal Borough will be piloting Personal Transport Budgets as a different way of funding independent travel. See paragraphs 164 to 165 for more details.

147. [Parents/carers](#) should note that an eligible child or young person with special educational needs, a disability or mobility issue will be offered home to school transport that is appropriate to the needs of

the child or young person. In many cases, a travel pass on public transport (perhaps with a pass for the parent/carer as well), will be appropriate. The Royal Borough will also explore whether a mileage allowance or Personal Transport Budget would be appropriate, when the child or young person's travel needs are considered as part of the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment or annual review process (see paragraphs 33 to 38 for more details about the assessment and annual reviews).

148. Transport in an individual vehicle, for children with or without an EHCP/statement, will be comparatively rare, and will usually only be agreed if it is the only option appropriate to the child or young person's needs.
149. As well as regularly reviewing whether children and young people receiving free home to school transport are still eligible and are receiving appropriate, cost-effective transport, the Royal Borough's School Transport Team keeps the routes and vehicles themselves under review. More detail is given in paragraphs 220 to 225.
150. The type of home to school transport offered to eligible children and young people will be appropriate to their needs, not the needs of the parents/carers.

Meeting the duty to provide free home to school transport for eligible children

151. If a child or young person is eligible for free home to school transport, and the Royal Borough has provided any one of the solutions listed in paragraph 151 above, the borough's duty to provide free home to school transport will be deemed to have been met.

Independent Travel Training

152. Independent Travel Training helps give a young person the skills and confidence to travel to school or college more independently, by foot, bus or train. Over time, a young person may progress from travelling to school in a taxi everyday, to using a public bus. This gives the older student the flexibility to travel at times that fit in with their timetable, whilst younger children may, after training, be able to travel to school with their friends.
153. Independent Travel Training is delivered on a one to one basis and is tailored to meet the needs of the young person.
154. The Royal Borough will be piloting Independent Travel Training in 2017/18 with a small number of young people with statements of SEN or an EHCP who are eligible for free home to school transport. If the scheme is successful then it will be rolled out further in 2018/19. More details about the scheme will be published on the Royal Borough's website.

Personal Transport Budgets

155. Personal Transport Budgets involve giving the parents/carers of an eligible child or young person a budget to enable them to make their own arrangements for home to school transport. This allows families to choose the most appropriate arrangements for their personal circumstances, and can also assist with older children moving towards independent travel.
156. The Royal Borough will be piloting Personal Transport Budgets with a small number of families of children or young people with statements of SEN or an EHCP who are eligible for free home to school transport. If the scheme is successful then it will be rolled out further.

Appeals against the type of transport offered

157. If parents/carers are dissatisfied with a decision taken about the type of transport offered, then they may challenge the decision. For more detail about making a challenge, or lodging a complaint, please see Section J, *Decisions, reviews and appeals*, starting on page .

H. The operation of transport

This section sets out some of the detail of how home to school transport operates, and the responsibilities of parents/carers and of the Royal Borough.

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The parents'/carers' responsibilities

158. Parents/carers have responsibilities to ensure the safe, efficient and cost effective transport of their child or young person receiving home to school transport from the borough. They must:

- Sign the Home to School Transport Code of Conduct (see paragraphs 169 to 173).
- Ensure that the child or young person is ready for transport (paragraphs 174 to 177).
- Ensure that the child or young person has their travel pass (paragraphs 178 to 180).
- Inform the Royal Borough of changes in circumstances as soon as possible (paragraphs 182, and 263 to 264).

The Royal Borough's responsibilities

159. The Royal Borough aims to provide safe, efficient and cost-effective travel assistance for children and young people entitled to transport. To do this, the Royal Borough will:

- Arrange reasonable pick-up and drop-off points on routes (see paragraphs 185 to 188).
- Arrange reasonable pick-up and drop-off times (paragraphs 189 to 196).
- Limit, as far as possible, maximum journey times (paragraphs 197 to 199).
- Provide Passenger Transport Assistants, where appropriate (paragraphs 200 to 211).
- Ensure additional standards of service for vehicles on borough routes (paragraphs 212 to 218).
- Monitor transport provision to ensure compliance with standards (paragraph 219).
- Give notice of both temporary and permanent variations to routes (paragraphs 220 to 225).
- Consider changes to a route due to emergencies (paragraph 226).
- Only withdraw transport assistance on reasonable grounds and with notice (paragraphs 227 to 234).

The Home to School Transport Code of Conduct

160. The behaviour of children and young people on home to school transport is the responsibility of parents/carers. For the comfort and safety of all passengers, any inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.

161. The parents/carers of all children and young people travelling on either public transport or on a contracted vehicle are required to have read, understood and signed the Royal Borough's Home to School Transport Code of Conduct before receiving their assistance with transport. This includes children and young people who are paying for concessionary seats. Having signed the code of conduct, parents/carers become responsible for the behaviour of the child or young person on home to school transport.

162. The code of conduct, which is updated from time to time, is available on the borough's website here:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/downloads/download/88/home_to_school_transport_code_of_conduct

163. Unacceptable behaviour will be monitored and may result in an exclusion from transport. Parents/carers will then become responsible for home to school transport during the period of the exclusion from transport.

164. Where a criminal act is suspected, the police will be notified. Schools will assist with investigating unacceptable behaviour and may wish to apply their own disciplinary actions, in addition to any exclusion from the transport.

Ensuring the child or young person is ready for transport

165. Where home to school transport is provided to an eligible child or young person, it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure their child is at the specified pick-up point and the specified time. A contracted vehicle will only wait for a maximum of three minutes beyond the specified time. A public bus or train will not, of course, wait at all beyond the scheduled time for the stop.
166. If a child or young person misses their transport, either to or from school or college, the Royal Borough will not arrange an alternative and the parents/carers will need to make their own arrangements for getting the child or young person to school or college or back home.
167. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure that their child or young person is safely taken to the pick-up point and home from the drop-off points. For younger children, or children and young people with specific needs, in particular, this may mean that a parent/carer or other responsible adult walks with the child to and from the pick-up/drop-off point.
168. The driver and any Passenger Transport Assistant will know when a child or young person is generally met by a parent/carer at their drop-off point. If the parent/carer is not at the drop-off point as expected then the driver will deliver the child or young person into the care of Social Services. In the event that a child or young person cannot be taken to Social Services, then the driver will take them to a police station. The parents/carer will then need to collect the child or young person themselves. These measures will only be taken as a last resort and, at the same time, the vehicle operator or the local authority will attempt to contact the parent/carer by telephone.

Requirement to carry a travel pass

169. All children and young people receiving assistance with home to school transport on a public transport route or on a contracted vehicle are required to carry their travel pass with them on their route, if they have been issued one.
170. If a child or young person is unable to present a pass when requested by the vehicle driver, passenger transport assistant or officer of the Royal Borough, they may be refused entry to the vehicle. Drivers are given guidance and training on how to report these incidences.
171. A child or young person issued with a pass and persistently travelling without it could be breaching the Code of Conduct, which could lead to having their transport withdrawn.
172. If a travel pass has been lost, then the parent/carer should complete a Replacement School Travel Pass form (cost applies) via the Royal Borough's website at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201022/school_transport_applications

Changes in circumstances

173. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform the Royal Borough as soon as possible if there is a significant change in circumstances, as set out in more detail in paragraphs 263 to 264.
174. Parents/carers will provide telephone numbers, including alternative numbers, to allow the vehicle operator and the Royal Borough to contact them quickly if required. The Royal Borough and the operator will not be responsible for any interruption in the service provided to a child or young person, or for any other difficulties arising, as a result of not having an up-to-date telephone number and/or home address.
175. If parents/carers feel that, as the result of an accident, planned surgery or illness the home to school transport arrangements made by the Royal Borough for a child or young person are no longer appropriate, a request for revisions to the arrangements must be made to transport@achievingforchildren.org.uk or by calling 01628 683800 at the earliest opportunity.

Reasonable pick-up and drop-off points

176. Children and young people on contracted vehicles will be picked up and dropped-off either from home or at a convenient point near to the home.
177. Whilst the duty to provide free home to school transport does not necessarily require a door to door service, arrangements will not expect a child to walk an unreasonably long distance to catch a public bus or contracted vehicle. A child or young person may be required to walk up to one mile from the home address to the pick-up point or vice versa, with or without a parent/carer as appropriate. The actual distances will depend on a range of circumstances, including the age of the child or young person, their individual needs and the nature of the route they are expected to walk to the designated pick-up point.
178. Unless the home address is directly on the route of a contracted vehicle, pick-up from the home address will usually only be provided in exceptional circumstances.
179. Parents/carers may not vary the agreed pick-up and drop-off times except in exceptional circumstances, by agreement with the Royal Borough. Neither Passenger Transport Assistants nor drivers are authorised to agree variations to the route. Any changes agreed with the borough in exceptional circumstances will not set a precedent for the future.

Reasonable pick-up and drop-off times

180. Children and young people on contracted vehicles will be picked up and dropped off at times that ensure that they reach school or college at the normal start time, and leave school at the normal finish time each day. These pick-up times will, as far as possible, take into account the maximum journey lengths, set out in paragraphs 197 to 199.
181. Parents/carers are reminded that a child or young person will not usually be transported at other times (as set out in paragraphs 103 to 104).

182. At the end of term, when some schools finish early, the Royal Borough may arrange for a contracted route to run at an earlier time, if practicable.
183. For children and young people attending residential (boarding) places and eligible for free home to school transport, parents/carers will be encouraged to transport the child or young person themselves, possibly using a Personal Transport Budget. If the borough does directly provide transport then arrangements will be made to reflect their attendance as follows:
- A weekly boarder will be:
 - Transported to the school at the start of the school week.
 - Transported home at the end of the school week.
 - A fortnightly boarder will be:
 - Transported to the school at the start of the school fortnight.
 - Transported home at the end of the school fortnight.
 - A termly boarder will be:
 - Transported to the school at the start of the school term.
 - Transported home at the end of the school term.
184. Other patterns of attendance (e.g. half-termly; boarding for more than 38 weeks a year) will be accommodated along the same principles.
185. Where a termly residential school (with or without a half term break) is closed for a long weekend or similar break, known as an 'exeat', during term time, then free home to school transport will be provided around that.
186. Journeys from home to a residential school may be made the afternoon or evening before the first day of school, where this is more practicable (e.g. on a Sunday afternoon or evening, instead of a Monday morning).
187. The usual restrictions on providing transport to locations other than the main school, as set out in paragraph 105 apply for children and young people receiving free transport to a residential school or college.

Maximum journey times

188. Best practice suggests that the maximum length of a journey for a child of primary school age might be up to 45 minutes each way. For a secondary age child or a young person aged 16+ the journey time might be up to 75 minutes each way. A child or young person's special education needs and/or disability might be such that it implies a shorter maximum journey time. The Royal Borough will take this best practice into account when considering what home to school transport provision to offer.

189. Journey times may exceed these limits in some circumstances, including:

- Exceptional traffic or weather conditions.
- Attendance at a special school.
- Attendance at a remote boarding school.
- Attendance at a remote school or institution in order to avoid exclusion.
- Attendance at an alternative school following an exclusion or managed move.

190. If a permanent change in road or other conditions makes it likely that a journey will permanently exceed the limits of 45 or 75 minutes (as appropriate), the difficulty will be discussed with the parents/carers.

Passenger Transport Assistants

Passenger Transport Assistants

191. Passenger Transport Assistants (PTAs) are sometimes used on shared or individual vehicle routes to monitor the well-being and conduct of children and young people and ensure their safety while the journey is in progress.

When Passenger Transport Assistants are used

192. PTAs are generally only provided on routes contracted by the Royal Borough for children and young people with an EHCP or statement and it is considered that the health and safety of the child, driver or anyone else travelling in the vehicle would be at risk if not provided. Usually, this would be where one or more of the children or young people on the route has:

- A severe physical condition.
- A medical condition that could require immediate referral to emergency services.
- Severe behavioural difficulties.

193. Except in exceptional circumstances, PTAs will not be provided for:

- Children attending [mainstream](#) schools.
- Hearing impaired children.

194. A PTA may be provided on a mainstream route in some exceptional circumstances. A PTA may also be provided for any child aged up to 6 years old (i.e. in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2) receiving free home to school transport who is not travelling with their parent/carer.

195. The need for a PTA will be considered jointly by the Children and Young People Disability Service (CYPDS) and the School Transport Team, usually during the assessment of an application for transport assistance. The provision will be reviewed annually as part of the child or young person's annual review process (see paragraphs 33 to 38 for more details about the assessment and annual reviews).

Parents/carers as Passenger Transport Assistants

196. In some circumstances, if a PTA is necessary, and is not already provided, a parent or carer may be asked to act as a PTA for their child.

Roles and responsibilities of the Passenger Transport Assistant

197. PTAs are given basic passenger training, including safeguarding and child sexual exploitation awareness training. This training is kept under review to ensure that the needs of all children and young people on the route can be met.
198. PTAs will have had an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check for people working with children before taking up any duties. They will display their ID badge at all times when on duty.
199. PTAs will ensure good behaviour on the routes, although parents/carers are reminded that an acceptable standard of behaviour is expected from all children and young people receiving free home to school transport.
200. In the event of a medical emergency, the PTA will request assistance from the emergency services. The PTA will not administer any medication or first aid, unless specifically trained and registered by the Royal Borough to carry out the particular procedure required.
201. PTAs have a responsibility to report any accidents, incidents, near misses or illness that occur in transit, to the Royal Borough. The PTA will write down the particulars of any such incident, provide any necessary care and report to the borough, who will then inform the parents/carers and school as appropriate.
202. The Royal Borough tries to ensure continuity of service by providing the same vehicle, driver and passenger assistant for a period of time. This cannot be guaranteed, however, and changes may be needed at short or no notice.

Additional standards of service for contracted vehicles

203. The Royal Borough will carry out checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service of potential drivers. All relevant offences will be considered, including driving convictions. Offences against children or young people, of violence and against traffic legislation will be among particular reasons for denying employment on a contracted route. Each case will be considered on its own merits and a right of appeal exists for drivers (and PTAs) denied employment.
204. The driver and any PTA will be required to carry identification at all times. If a parent/carer feels that their child would benefit from meeting the drivers (and PTAs) on a contracted route before starting they can contact the School Transport Team to make arrangements for this to happen. This may not be possible in all cases, particularly if arrangements have had to be made quickly, or in the case of a substitute driver or assistant. Parents and schools are asked to check the identification of any unfamiliar driver or PTA before entrusting a child or young person to his or her care.
205. It is a requirement that drivers and PTAs should have basic training in the requirements of the children they convey. In addition, the vehicle operator will be expected to carry individual information including schools' and parents/carers' contact details, and warnings of any relevant medical conditions. All such information held by the operator and the authority is subject to the Data Protection Act.
206. The vehicle will also be expected to have an operational means of contact with its base, such as a mobile telephone or two-way radio. This will be used to communicate, amongst other things, any significant delay to a journey so that the parents/carers can be informed.

207. In some cases a vehicle may also be equipped with an on-board camera. These cameras are sealed to prevent tampering, and footage is recorded over on a loop and only viewed in the case of reports of behavioural issues by young people or concerns regarding the staff on the route.
208. If a child or young person on a contracted route is taken ill during the course of a journey, the vehicle will either proceed to the home or school, or will stop and summon assistance by dialling the emergency services. Arrangements for any other children or young people in the vehicle to complete their journeys will be made as quickly as possible.
209. The duties of the driver (and PTA) are limited to the vehicle only. The parents/carers are expected to take the child to and collect the child from the vehicle at home or at the drop-off point as necessary. At school, a member of the school staff is expected to collect the child from the vehicle and take the child to the vehicle.

Monitoring transport provision

210. The Royal Borough will undertake regular checks to ensure compliance with service standards. These checks will include:
- Spot checks on equipment, vehicles and licenses.
 - Checks to ensure all drivers and passenger transport assistants are authorised, carry identification and undertake duties in accordance with service standards and requirements.
 - Checks to ensure that contracts are operating in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Variations to routes and route planning

211. As well as regularly reviewing whether children and young people receiving free home to school transport are still eligible and are receiving appropriate, cost-effective transport, the Royal Borough's School Transport Team keeps the routes and vehicles themselves under review. This helps ensure that home to school transport is delivered as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.
212. Changes may include:
- A new pick-up and set-down point.
 - A change to journey times.
 - A change to the contractor employed.
 - A change in the size/type of vehicle.
 - Addition or withdrawal of a passenger transport assistant.
213. When reviewing the routes and vehicles, the Royal Borough will not normally consult with parents/carers, so that reviews can be carried out quickly and efficiently. Where, however, a child or young person's special educational needs indicate a sensitivity to change, the impact of the review will be considered and discussed with the school and parents/carers.
214. Where possible, notice of changes to routes will be given to parents/carers. In some cases, changes will be made at very short notice, particularly if these are temporary changes due to driver or passenger illness, road closures or termination of a contract with a vehicle operator.
215. Very rarely, it may be necessary to temporarily cancel a route taking a child or young person to school or college. This is most likely to be when bad weather including flooding or icy conditions makes it

unsafe, or is expected to make it unsafe, for the vehicle to travel. If, in these circumstances, parents/carers decide to make alternative arrangements to transport their child to school, this will be entirely at the parents'/carers' own discretion and cost. The parents/carers will also be responsible for the return journey if conditions have not improved sufficiently for the contracted vehicle to make the journey safely.

216. In all circumstances, however, where a child or young person has been transported to school or college, arrangements will be made to return them home, to their designated dropping-off point, or to a place of safety.

Emergencies and changes at short notice

217. The Royal Borough will attempt to make arrangements at short notice, including emergencies, but this cannot be guaranteed, particularly if a child or young person is travelling on a contracted vehicle with other occupants. Parents/carers will probably, therefore, need to make their own arrangements at their own expense in the case of an emergency. The Royal Borough does not accept responsibility for any such arrangements made by parents/carers.

Withdrawal of home to school transport assistance

218. Home to school transport assistance can be withdrawn for a number of reasons. The most common will be:

- Changing eligibility, including age and income.
- Changes in the circumstances of the child or young person.
- Changes in the ability of a child or young person to travel safely to school or college.
- Re-measurement of home to school transport distances.
- Errors and applications based on false information.

219. Where a child or young person reaches one of the age thresholds set out in the Royal Borough's eligibility criteria (e.g. they reach the age of 8 or 16), then home to school transport assistance will be withdrawn at the end of the academic year in which the child or young person reaches that age.

220. Where a child or young person is eligible for free home to school transport because they are from a low income family, parents/carers are asked to re-apply for home to school transport each year, providing evidence of their low income. In most circumstances, therefore, if a child or young person is no longer eligible on low income grounds their free home to school transport will be withdrawn at the end of the academic year.

221. Where a child or young person's circumstances change, such as a change of address or change of school, any home to school transport assistance will usually continue until the child or young person moves to the new address or school. Assistance will only continue past that date if the child or young person is still eligible for free home to school transport in their new circumstances.

222. As a child or young person with special educational needs, a disability or mobility issue gets older he or she may become able to safely walk (and/or take public transport for post-16) to their school or college. This will be assessed annually as part of the annual review process and could mean that a child or young person will no longer be eligible for free home to school transport. Any resulting

changes to free home to school transport will be implemented at the start of the first school term that begins 14 weeks after the annual review date, or sooner, by mutual agreement.

223. In some circumstances a child or young person's eligibility for free home to school transport may change because the home to school transport distance has been re-measured. This could be because a new road or footpath shortens the safe walking route between home to school or because a more accurate measurement of an existing route has become available. If the child or young person is now closer than the [statutory distance](#) to their nearest appropriate school, then free home to school transport will be withdrawn. At least 12 weeks' notice will be given by the Royal Borough to the parents/carers.
224. Where travel assistance has been provided because of a mistake in assessing eligibility by the Royal Borough, home to school transport will be withdrawn. At least 12 weeks' notice will be given by the Royal Borough to the parents/carers.
225. Where travel assistance has been provided on the basis of false or misleading information provided by the parents/carers, home to school transport may be withdrawn immediately and with no more than 4 weeks' notice. This will apply in all cases except where the child or young person is still eligible for assistance. If the Royal Borough believes that the information from the parents/carers was deliberately false or misleading information, the costs of providing any assistance with transport may be sought from the parents/carers.

I. Making an application for transport

This section sets out how to make an application for the free home to school transport or transport assistance. Please refer to the relevant sections for the full details of eligibility in each case.

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Accepting and understanding the policy

226. When making an application for assistance with home to school transport, parents/carers will be asked to declare that they have:

- Read and understood the Royal Borough’s Home to School Transport Policy.
- Read, understood and signed the Home to School Transport Code of Conduct.

Applications for free home to school transport, aged 4 to 16

Policy 1 and Policy 2: standard and low income eligibility for children aged 4 to 16

227. Applications for free home to school transport under Policy 1 and Policy 2 can be made via the Royal Borough’s website at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201022/school_transport_applications

228. In addition to your child’s basic details, you will need:

- Documentary evidence (to be provided electronically), if you are applying for free home to school transport under Policy 2, that:
 - The child is in receipt of free school meals (e.g. a letter from the school).
 - You are in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credit (e.g. the tax credit award notice).

229. If you are applying for free home to school transport to a school on the grounds of religion or philosophical belief (Policy 2c only), you will be asked to contact the leader of the religious establishment your child attends to provide additional information to support your application. Full instructions are provided as part of the application process.

230. If a child is awarded free home to school transport under Policy 1 then they will continue to receive this until they leave the school or their circumstances (such as their home address) change. At this point a new application for free home to school transport will need to be made.

231. If a child is awarded free home to school transport under Policy 2 then they will be asked to re-apply each year, providing evidence of their low income. They will continue to receive the free home to school transport for the duration of the school year unless their circumstances (such as their home address) change. At this point a new application for free home to school transport will need to be made.

Policy 3: further eligibility for EHCP/statemented children aged 4 to 16

232. If your child has special educational needs that cannot be met by SEN support within the educational setting, the Royal Borough will need to consider whether an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is required.

233. If your child already has an EHCP or statement, and you would like them to now be considered for free home to school transport, you will need to make an application for free home to school transport under Policy 1, Policy 2 or Policy 3 by completing the form on the Royal Borough’s website at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201022/school_transport_applications

Applications for home to school transport assistance, aged 16 to 18

Policy 4: general post-16 transport eligibility - Great Western Railway reduced fare card

234. Applications for a National Rail 16-17 Saver Card can be made via the dedicated website at <https://www.16-17saver.co.uk/>

Policy 5: SEN post-16 transport eligibility

235. Most, if not all, young people aged 16 to 18 with special educational needs will already have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or statement if they need one. If not, then the Royal Borough will need to consider whether an EHCP is required, as set out in more detail in paragraphs 33 to 35, starting on page .

236. For 16 to 18 year olds, free transport is only given if the young person is also from a [low income family](#) and has a special educational need, disability or mobility issue that means that they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to that school, as set out in Policy 5.

237. You will need to submit a new application before the start of each school year the young person will continue to study. Applications can be made via the Royal Borough's website at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201022/school_transport_applications

238. Any agreed home to school transport arrangements will continue to be considered via the annual review process.

Applications for home to school transport assistance, aged 19 to 25

Policy 6: Transport for young people with high needs

239. Where a young person with high needs is continuing their education past the age of 19, the parents/carers should submit a new application before the start of each school year the young person will continue to study. Applications can be made via the Royal Borough's website at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201022/school_transport_applications

Applications for further assistance with transport

240. If you do not qualify for free home to school transport or assistance with home to school transport under the standard policies set out in Sections A, B and C the Royal Borough may agree to provide assistance in some exceptional circumstances, as set out in Section E, *Further assistance with transport*, starting on page .

241. To apply, parents/carers/young people should complete the application for home to school transport on the borough's website, attaching any relevant medical or other evidence and a supporting statement:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201022/school_transport_applications

Applications for concessionary fare paying seats

242. Applications for a concessionary seats can be made via the Royal Borough's website at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201022/school_transport_applications/1264/pay_for_school_transpo
[rt](#)

Applying in writing

243. If you are unable to apply online, you can visit local libraries where internet access is available and complete the applications there. Alternatively, you can contact the council's Customer Contact Centre on 01628 683800 and they can complete the application on your behalf.

Processing of applications

244. The Royal Borough aims to assess all in-year applications within 10 to 15 working days. Applications for transport assistance to start in the new school year in September will be processed from May onwards and will take up to 25 working days due to the high volume of applications received at this time of year. Parent/carers will be notified of the application decision as soon as it has been made, and of the transport assignment from July onwards. Any applications received after 1 August will be assessed as quickly as possible, but may not be completed before the young person returns to school/college. In these cases it is the parent/carer's responsibility to make their own travel arrangements until the assessment is complete and the young person has been assigned to transport (if eligible).

Applications for the disabled persons concessionary bus pass

245. Applications for the disabled persons concessionary bus pass have to be made in person at one of the Royal Borough's two issuing sites:

- Maidenhead Library, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1QU.
- Windsor Library, Bachelors Acre, Windsor, SL4 1ER.

246. You will need to bring evidence that you live permanently in the Royal Borough, and proof of eligibility. More information about how to apply, and the full list of documents that we will accept as proof of eligibility, can be viewed on our website at:

www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200931/journey_planning/860/concessionary_fares

247. The bus pass is usually sent out within 10 days.

Applications for bus passes on public transport routes

248. Applications for season tickets and/or discount on public bus routes must be made direct to the route operator. The local bus companies are:

- | | | |
|----------------------|--|---------------|
| ● Courtney Buses | www.courtneybuses.com | 01189 733 486 |
| ● First Buses | www.firstgroup.com/berkshire-thames-valley | 01753 524 144 |
| ● White Bus Services | www.whitebus.co.uk | 01344 228 612 |

249. You can find out more information about local public transport services at the Traveline South East website:

<http://www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk>

Change of circumstances

250. Where a child or young person receives free home to school transport, or any other assistance with home to school transport from the borough, it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to notify us of:

- Any change of address.
- Any change in the school attended.
- Any other changes that might affect the eligibility for home to school transport.

251. When a young person moves home or changes school a new application will be required. Applications can be made via the Royal Borough's website at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201022/school_transport_applications

252. The Royal Borough will then re-assess the child or young person's eligibility under the policies set out in this document. See paragraphs 94 to 97 for more details about re-assessing eligibility in these circumstances.

253. It is advised that applications are made as soon as a change of circumstances is known, preferably before the change takes place, to allow time for the application to be assessed and new transport arranged if the young person is eligible for assistance.

254. If parents/carers feel that, as the result of an accident, planned surgery or illness the home to school transport arrangements made by the Royal Borough for a child or young person are no longer appropriate, a request for revisions to the arrangements must be made, in writing, giving a minimum of five working days notice. This should be sent to transport@achievingforchildren.org.uk

J. Decisions, reviews and appeals

This section sets out the process that parents/carers must follow if they are unhappy with decisions taken by the Royal Borough in relation to home to school transport.

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Decisions

255. Decisions in relation to home to school transport are taken by Royal Borough officers with authorisation to do so. This includes decisions on:

- Eligibility for free home to school transport or assistance with home to school transport.
- The type of transport offered (e.g. bus pass, place on a minibus or taxi).
- Any other practical matters of transport assistance.

256. Parents/carers and young people can challenge these decisions informally, by contacting the School Transport Team on 01628 683800 or at transport@achievingforchildren.org.uk. Alternatively, a formal appeal against a decision can be made.

Home to school transport appeals process

What decisions can be challenged through the appeals process?

257. Appeals can be made against decisions by the Royal Borough in relation to:

- Eligibility for home to school transport.
- The home to school distance measurement.
- The safety of the route.
- The transport arrangements offered.

258. Where the child or young person has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or statement, it may be that a disagreement about transport is part of a wider question of school provision and placement. In these cases, the home to school transport appeals process is not the route for this to be reconsidered. Instead, this may be a matter for the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. This body does not hear appeals specifically about transport, but may consider the issue as part of a wider appeal. The parents/carers should contact the Children and Young Persons Disability Service (CYPDS) on 01628 685878 or at cypds@achievingforchildren.org.uk directly to discuss this further.

Appeal stage 1: review by a senior officer

259. Parents/carers and young people have 20 working days from receipt of the Royal Borough's decision to make a written request to the School Transport Team asking for a review of any decision relating to the matters set out in paragraph 270. This request should be sent to:

The School Transport Team,
Achieving for Children
Town Hall
St Ives Road
Maidenhead
SL6 1RF

260. Alternatively, parents/carers/young people can email the request to transport@achievingforchildren.org.uk

261. The written request should detail why the decision should be reviewed, and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances that should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

262. A senior officer will review the original decision within 20 working days of the Royal Borough receiving the written request. The parents/carers/young person will be sent a detailed written notification of the outcome of the review, setting out:

- The decision reached.
- How the review was carried out, including any standard followed, e.g. Road Safety GB guidance.
- What factors were considered.
- The reasons for the decision reached.
- Information about how the parents/carers/young person can proceed to stage two of the appeal process, if they are still unhappy.

Appeal stage 2: review by an independent appeal panel

263. If the parents/carers or young person are still unhappy with the decision made, they have the right to escalate the matter to stage 2, where an independent panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the appellant and the Royal Borough.

264. To ensure that the panel has all the relevant information to review the case, you should complete the home to school transport appeal form, available on the Royal Borough's website at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200292/school_transport/822/school_transport_appeals

The completed form should be sent to:

Clerk to the Appeals Panel
 Democratic Services Section
 Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
 Town Hall
 St Ives Road
 Maidenhead
 SL6 1RF

265. Alternatively, the form can be emailed to democratic.services@rbwm.gov.uk. If you do not have access to the online forms, please contact democratic services on 01688 796529 or at the email above.

266. Following the appeal hearing, a detailed written notification of the outcome will be sent to the parents/carers/young person, setting out:

- The decision reached.
- How the review was carried out, including any standard followed, e.g. Road Safety GB guidance.
- What factors were considered.
- The reasons for the decision reached.
- Information about how the parents/carers/young person can complain to the Secretary of State.

Further avenues for appeal

Judicial review

267. Parents/carers and young people have the right to seek a judicial review of a decision made by the appeal panel. A judicial review would ask the courts to consider whether the panel has acted lawfully in taking its decision (e.g. has it followed the correct process and/or considered all of the evidence properly) rather than whether the decision of the panel is the correct one. If a judicial review is upheld then the independent appeals panel could be asked to consider the case again. If a parents/carers/young person is considering judicial review then the Royal Borough advises that they should seek independent legal advice immediately.

Complaints

268. If the parents/carers/young person wish to complain about how the local authority has handled their application, then they can use the Royal Borough's complaints process. Further information about this is available on the borough's website at:

www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200407/complaints_procedure/898/complaints_policy_and_procedure

269. You can also call 01628 683800 and ask for more information about making a complaint.

270. Your local councillor will be happy to help you at any stage, simply to give advice, provide additional information or to handle the complaint on your behalf. The Leader of the council is always willing to assist if you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been handled or its outcome. You can find details of your local council/leader of the council by calling 01628 796319 or online at:

rbwm.moderngov.co.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1

Local Government Ombudsman

271. If, having been through the Royal Borough's complaints process the parents/carers or young person are still unhappy then they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. The ombudsman can be contacted at:

The Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH

0300 061 0614

www.lgo.org.uk/

Other complaints

272. Queries or complaints relating to journey planning; the standard/condition of vehicles; drivers; passenger assistants and any other issues relating to the journey to and from school should initially be brought to the attention of the School Transport Team on 01628 683800 or at transport@achievingforchildren.org.uk

K. Changes to the policy from 2019

This section sets out some changes that have been made to the Royal Borough’s home to school transport policies, following consultation in 2016. These changes largely come into effect from September 2017.

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Changes to the standard policy for 2019/20 academic year

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Changes to the standard policy for 2020/21 academic year

Nature of Change	Page No.	Details
General Update	Various	Dates changed from 2019/20 to 2020/21 throughout policy
General Update	All	Footer dates changed to 2020/21
General Update	All	Page and paragraph numbering updated to accommodate new information
General Update	32	Cost of fare paying seats updated for 2019/20
Clarification	65	Home address in cases where residence is split between parents / carers.
Clarification	32	Concessionary fare paying scheme fee waiver for low income families of Royal Borough residents only.
Clarification	15	Note that transport is to meet the needs of the child and not the parent copied to appear in Section A (Standard eligibility for transport)
Clarification	24	Details of National Rail 16-17 Saver Scheme, replacing previous Reduced Fare Railcard

L. Relevant legislation

This section outlines the relevant legislation.

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Legislation

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Legislation

273. The Royal Borough's home to school transport policy sets out the way in which the local authority has decided to exercise its powers and duties to provide home to school transport in accordance with:

- Section 509 of the Education Act 1996.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The Children and Families Act 2014.

274. The policy also has regard to the Equality Act 2010, which aims to protect disabled people and prevent disability discrimination by ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the needs of all individuals. Under the act, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

275. The Royal Borough has duties, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to promote sustainable travel for children. These duties include:

- An assessment of travel and transport needs.
- An audit of sustainable travel and transport infrastructure that may be used when travelling to or from school.
- A strategy to develop and promote sustainable travel and transport infrastructure.

M. Definitions

This section provides definitions for some commonly used terms in this policy.

Definitions of terms used in this policy	
College	<p>For the purposes of this policy, a college is any provider or institution offering sixth form education, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school. • A Further Education institution. • An authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education. • An establishment funded directly by the Education Funding Agency. • A learning provider that is funded by the local authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning. <p>The institution need not be located within the geographical boundary of the Royal Borough.</p>
Continuing student	<p>A continuing student is a young person who, aged 19 or over, is still on a course that they started aged 16 to 18.</p>
Designated area	<p>Most schools in the Royal Borough offer priority for places to children who live within a defined geographical area around the school. This is called the designated area. You can view the designated areas online using the Royal Borough’s online mapping portal ‘Know Your Neighbourhood’ at: http://mol.rbwm.gov.uk/mol/</p>
Discretionary home to school transport	<p>This means that the local authority is not, by law, required to offer this home to school transport, but currently chooses to.</p>
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	<p>Children have an Education, Health and Care Plan if they have severe learning, behavioural or physical difficulties that affect their ability to learn. EHCPs are replacing the Statements of Special Educational Need.</p>
Fair Access Protocol	<p>The Royal Borough’s Fair Access Protocol ensures that any child without a school place resumes their education in a suitable school with the minimum of delay. The protocol can be found online here: https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200115/education_and_learning/791/school_admissions/11</p>
Free home to school transport	<p>The Royal Borough can provide free home to school transport in a number of ways, including paying a mileage allowance; providing a Personal Transport Budget; providing a bus or train pass; or organising a shared or individual vehicle.</p>
TIP	<p>If you are viewing this online, press ‘Alt’ and ‘⌂’ together on your keyboard to return you to where you were when you clicked on the blue text.</p>
Home address	<p>The home address is, for the purposes of this policy, where the child mainly lives, normally with someone who has parental responsibility. Proof of residence may be requested (e.g. receipt of child benefit) to confirm that a child and the child’s family lives at the address. The Council will not generally provide travel assistance to or from any other address.</p>

	In cases where parents or carers live separately the home address will be taken to be the address where the child lives most of the time. Where a child lives equally with both parents at different addresses the child's home address will be taken to be the address of the parent that is deemed to be the child's main residence. In the absence of a formalised legal agreement we will consider all available evidence that you provide to support your application.
TIP	If you are viewing this online, press 'Alt' and '↩' together on your keyboard to return you to where you were when you clicked on the blue text .
Low income families	A low income family is one that is in receipt of maximum level of Working Tax Credit or whose children receive free school meals. For post-16 eligibility, this means the young person qualifies for income support, and/or whose parents/carers qualify for income support or are in receipt of the maximum amount of working tax credit.
Mainstream school	A mainstream school is a school that is not a school specifically for children and young people with an EHDC or statement.
National eligibility criteria for access to care	These are criteria set by the government to help local authorities who should receive assistance with adult social care. The eligibility threshold for adults with care and support needs is based on identifying how a person's needs affect their ability to achieve relevant outcomes, and how this impacts on their wellbeing. You can find out more detail about the criteria online here http://www.optalis.org/royal-borough-of-windsor-and-maidenhead-services/assessing-your-care-and-support-needs/national-eligibility-criteria-for-care-and-support
Nearest appropriate school	The nearest appropriate school for the purposes of this policy is the nearest school that is suitable for the child or young person's age, gender and ability, and any special educational needs that the child may have. Consideration of which school is appropriate, in terms of this policy, excludes consideration of: (a) An opinion that a school is inappropriate or unsuitable because of your child's suitability for selective education or the school's Ofsted ratings, exam performance and popularity. (b) An opinion that a school is inappropriate or unsuitable because of a religious or philosophical belief (including lack of belief) that you hold. The exception to this is when a child is from a low-income family and qualifies under Policy 2. The Royal Borough does not accept that obtaining a place at a grammar school means that the grammar school in question can be regarded as the nearest appropriate school. Where a child or young person's Education Health and Care Plan or statement names a particular school, that will usually be deemed the nearest appropriate school under this policy. The words "appropriate" and "suitable" in relation to a school place are interchangeable for the purposes of this policy.
Parents /carers	In this policy, the parents/carers will be the person(s) with whom the child or young person usually lives. This can include a person or persons who is not a parent, but who has parental responsibility or care of the child or young person. If that person or persons is not a birth or adoptive parent, then evidence may be sought to ascertain the legal basis of the relationship.
Road route	This applies to Policies 2b and 2c.

	The home to school distance for children aged 11 to 16 and from low income families attending one of their three nearest appropriate schools/attending their nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief is measured along the shortest available route that is passable using a suitable motorised vehicle, i.e. roads.
Royal Borough	This means the local authority, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and the geographical area it covers.
TIP	If you are viewing this online, press 'Alt' and '↩' on your keyboard to return to where you were before you clicked on the blue text .

Safe walking route

This applies to Policies 1a, 1b, 2a, 3a and 3b.

The home to school distance is measured from the home address to the school/college using the shortest available safe walking route. The distance is assessed using the closest pedestrian entrances to both the home and the school/college. The measurement is made using the Royal Borough's electronic mapping system. This may be checked using other methods, including physical measurement.

A route will normally only be available if it can be used safely throughout the academic year, and may include footpaths and other pathways, as well as recognised roads. If the child cannot reasonably be expected to walk along this route, even when accompanied by an adult, then the route is considered 'unsafe' and not available.

Walking routes are assessed in accordance with Road Safety GB guidance. Routes are considered to be acceptable if the following criteria are met:

- A road with heavy traffic flow must have continuous adequate footway provision.
- Roads with light traffic flow must have adequate step-off areas with good sight lines.
- Roads with low traffic flow do not require step-off areas, but should have sufficiently good sight lines to be able to see approaching vehicles.
- If there is a need to cross roads there must be sufficient gaps in the traffic flow and sight lines to allow enough opportunities to cross safely, or there must be traffic calming, formal / informal crossing facilities or a school crossing patrol.

If there are any disputes about the distance then an independent qualified and/or experienced officer will physically measure the route using a pedometer.

Routes that were previously not available because they were unsafe may become available if improvement works have been carried out to make it safe. In these circumstances eligibility for free home to school transport will need to be re-assessed.

School

For the purposes of this policy, a school is any state-maintained provider offering statutory age education, e.g.:

- Community.
- Voluntary controlled.
- Voluntary aided.
- Academy.
- Free.
- Community or Foundation Special School.
- Special academy or free school.
- University Technical College.
- Studio School.
- Pupil Referral Unit or alternative provision, where this is arranged by the Royal Borough.
- City Technical College (CTC), city college for technology of the arts (CCTA) or an academy).

For children with an Education Health Care Plan or a statement of Special Educational Needs, this may also include independent/private schools (i.e. schools not maintained by the local authority or by the government via the Education Funding Agency), where it is the only school, or nearest of two or more schools named as the Royal Borough's preferred placement on the child's plan or statement.

	The school need not be located within the geographical boundary of the Royal Borough.
TIP	If you are viewing this online, press 'Alt' and '↶' on your keyboard to return to where you were before you clicked on the blue text .
Sibling	Children and young people are defined as siblings if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are a full/half/step/foster brother or sister; and • They live at the same address.
Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Children have a Statement of Special Educational Needs if they have severe learning, behavioural or physical difficulties that affect their ability to learn. Statements have been replaced by the EHCP.
Special school	A school that provides education for children with special educational needs, usually those with an Education, Health or Care Plan or statement. Some special schools are independent (private) schools.
Statutory distance	This is the distance set out in law that helps decide whether a child or young person is eligible for free home to school transport. It varies by age and, for the purposes of this policy is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children aged 4 to 8, the statutory distance is 2 miles. • For children aged 8 to 16, the statutory distance is 3 miles. <p>For children from low income families,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children aged 8 to 11, the statutory distance is 2 miles. • For children aged 8 to 16, the statutory distance is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Between 2 and 6 to one of the three nearest appropriate schools. o Between 2 and 15 miles to their nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief.
Statutory home to school transport	This means that the local authority must, by law, provide free home to school transport to these children, if requested.
TIP	If you are viewing this online, press 'Alt' and '↶' on your keyboard to return to where you were before you clicked on the blue text .