

Southwark School Travel Assistance Policy

Policy Statement

Southwark Council is committed to ensuring that every child, young person and family in Southwark leads independent, healthy lives, feeling safe and secure and achieving their full potential.

The Children and Young People's Plan commits partners to work together to simplify the local system and improve its value for money, sustainability and effectiveness, and to develop services that build the ability and resilience of children, young people and their families to be independent. The CYPP also commits partners to increasing the independence for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), and their families. The aim of this policy is that all children and young people should lead lives that are independent and as free from restriction as possible thus contributing to the five outcomes for children and young people:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being

The policy sets out the criteria for eligibility to travel assistance, how parents/carers may apply, how decisions are made and how parents/carers may appeal against decisions that they are unhappy with.

The policy is intended to provide clarity for parents/carers facing a wide range of circumstances, and to ensure that children and young people with particular and significant needs are appropriately supported.

If Southwark Council agrees to provide travel assistance it will be provided in a safe manner taking account of the child or young person's specific needs and with regard to the best use of the Council's resources. As a general rule, the council believes that the majority of children and young people will be able to travel on free public bus transport.

The Council is also committed to reducing traffic congestion, improving road safety and reducing the environmental impact of vehicle journeys by promoting the use of alternative forms of travel, such as walking, cycling and use of integrated public transport. In this regard, the Council has adopted the principles contained in its Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy and works closely with schools to develop School Travel Plans that help to achieve this aim. Wherever possible, in the provision of travel assistance the Council will consider travel options for 'eligible children and young people' that lead to reducing the number and length of vehicle journeys.

This policy has been developed with full regard to the Department for Education, Home to School Travel Guidance.

Children and young people covered by this policy

This policy applies to all children and young people who are resident in Southwark or in the care of Southwark Council and are of statutory school age or up to age 19 in the case of young people with a statement of special educational needs. Young people over the age of 16 without a statement of special educational needs should refer to the Council's Post-16

Travel policy. Children of pre-school age will not be transported by Southwark other than in exceptional circumstances.

Parental responsibility

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school. This includes arranging any necessary travel arrangements to and from school and/or accompanying their child as necessary.

No dispensation will be made for parents who are working at the time their children travel to and from school. Parents are expected to make other suitable arrangements for someone else to accompany their children as necessary.

SECTION 1: Children and young people with a statement of special educational needs (SEN)

The majority of Southwark children and young people with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) do not receive specialised travel assistance from the Council. Wherever possible the Council expects parents/carers of children and young people with an SEN statement to make arrangements for their child to attend school in the same way as for parents/carers of children without a statement, as this is an important factor in developing the child or young person's independence, social and life skills.

The Council has a duty to ensure that **all** arrangements make best use of the Council's resources, whilst continuing to work closely with parents/carers, schools and other agencies.

Factors taken into consideration

In determining eligibility under Schedule 35B Education Act 1996 for the provision of travel assistance; the following criteria will be used;

- Age of the child or young person
- Distance from home to school
- School attending
- Length of journey
- Ability to travel to school alone or accompanied either by walking or using the London bus scheme
- Whether the child or young person has a disability or learning difficulty which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult to walk or travel to school by bus
- Whether the parent/carer has a disability which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for them to take their child to school
- Whether the family is in receipt of any other form of support towards travel (including Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance or motability vehicle). Where a motability vehicle has been provided for the benefit of the child or young person, this may be taken into account during the assessment process.
- Any other exceptional circumstances applicable to each case

When assessing eligibility for assistance, consideration will not be given to:

- Personal circumstances such as parents/carers attending work or looking after other children.
- Personal circumstances when considering collection and drop off points
- The LA considers parental preference in the case of naming a school in Part 4 of the statement unless to do so would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources. Where the Council considers that there is a suitable school nearer to the child or young person's home than the school of parental preference; both schools may be named in Part 4 of the child or young person's statement. It is open to the Council to include reference to the parent/carer accepting responsibility for all travel arrangements and associated costs to the preferred school in Part 4.

What assistance may be offered

Travel assistance can only be provided for the beginning and end of the school day or at the beginning and end of the week/term in the case of boarding schools. Travel assistance will not be provided to facilitate attendance at non-statutory school activities, such as breakfast or after school clubs or for medical check ups or if the child or young person has to be collected from school because of illness except in exceptional circumstances. Activities that form part of the national curriculum will not be affected.

Once travel assistance has been agreed, a solution will be determined. It is for the council to decide what type of assistance will be provided. This decision will be based on the identified needs of the individual child or young person. Southwark has a commitment to continuously ensure value for money. It should be noted that the mode of travel assistance offered will be reviewed regularly and may change as the needs of the child or young person change.

Priority will always be given to travel assistance solutions that help to develop travel independence skills to enable children and young people to lead independent lives as they grow older.

The following options will be considered when assessing travel assistance solutions. Over time additional innovative solutions may be developed and therefore, the options considered are not necessarily limited to those described below;

- **Freedom pass:** To enable the child or young person to travel to school accompanied as necessary using London underground services. http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/433/disabled_peoples_travel_passes_or_freedom_pass
- **Travel pass:** To enable the child or young person to travel to school accompanied, if necessary, by an adult via public transport solutions other than the free London bus scheme or the London Underground.
- **Independent travel training:** Independent travel training, focused on the needs and capabilities of a young person, can increase independence by developing personal, social and life skills. By working closely with parents/carers, the child or young person and the school, travel training will contribute to greater independence for the child or young person and thus will always be given priority as an option when considering suitable solutions.
- **Parental reimbursement** – Parents/carers may receive reimbursement at the HMRC rate for using their own vehicle to transport their eligible child or young person to and from school.
- **Direct payments** – It may be possible for the Council to provide parents/carers with direct payments where parents/carers agree to arrange transport for their children themselves.
- **Pupil Support Assistants:** It may be possible for a pupil to walk or to travel on public transport if they have some assistance and where it is deemed impossible for the child or young person's parent/carer to accompany their child. The Council may provide a pupil support assistant to accompany the child or young person and help build a level of independence over time.
- **Transport vehicles:** Where assessed as essential, the Council may provide a vehicle to transport a child or young person to and from school. Where transport

vehicles are provided, these will be vehicles and drivers provided by a suitably qualified, registered, commercial provider working to contractual standards set by the Council.

Whenever possible, children and young people will travel together in buses. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those travelling on them. Each route will be planned on the basis of school start and finish times and the shortest possible route for all children and young people travelling on a particular vehicle.

Children and young people will be picked up and dropped off at a safe and convenient location, within a reasonable distance from their home. In many cases this will be from a recognised bus stop.

- **Home pick up:** A home pick up and drop off will only be made where it is deemed essential due to the child or young person's significant needs.
- **Taxis and private hire vehicles** - Under very exceptional circumstances the Council may transport pupils in separate taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the child or young person.

Provision of Pupil Support Assistants

A pupil support assistant may be provided to accompany a pupil to school in exceptional circumstances whether using public transport or on provided transport. Pupil support assistants will only be provided where they are necessary for the safe operation of vehicles and/or the care of children or young people. This will be determined during the assessment process.

A pupil support assistant will not be provided simply because of the child or young person's age or because he/she does not know the driver.

SECTION 2: Children and young people without a statement of special educational needs

All children and young people up to the age of 16 (up to 18 if in full time education) are entitled to free travel on buses within London. A free photocard can be obtained by either:

- Visiting and downloading an application form from www.tfl.gov.uk
- Calling into any underground or ticket retailer for an application form.

The council regards this provision as sufficient to meet the travel needs of the majority of children and young people under the age of 19.

There may be a small number of children and young people who are eligible for assistance for whom it is necessary to travel to and from school using train or tube services in which case a travel card may be provided.

To be eligible the child or young person must:

- Along with their parent/carer, live in Southwark
- Be of statutory school age and in Year 11 or below
- Be attending or have secured a place at the nearest appropriate qualifying school
- Live outside the statutory walking distance of 2 miles for child under eight years and 3 miles for a young person aged eight and over or:
- Live within the statutory walking distance but be unable to walk to school accompanied as necessary because of the nature of the route

- Be unable to travel accompanied as necessary using the TfL free bus scheme on any London Journey Planner timetabled journey in less than 45 minutes for children of primary school age or 75 minutes for young people of secondary school age
- Be attending their nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief (the school must be selected on genuine grounds of religion or belief, evidence of adherence will be requested to support the application).
- Additional exceptional circumstances may be considered (see definitions page for examples of exceptional circumstances).

Additional support for children and young people from low income families:

In addition to the above criteria, children and young people from low income families (those who are entitled to free school meals or who are in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credits) are afforded additional rights:

- For children between the ages of eight to 11 from low income families, the three mile walking distance is lowered to 2 miles.
- Young people of compulsory school age over 11 years from low income families may be eligible for travel assistance to any of their nearest three qualifying schools where those schools are between two miles (measured using the shortest walking route) and six miles (measured using the shortest driving route) from the family home
- Young people of compulsory school age over 11 years from low income families may be eligible for travel assistance to their nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief where that school is more than two miles (measured using the shortest walking route) but less than 15 miles (measured using the shortest driving route) from the family home.

Consideration will be given to:

- The age of the child or young person
- The school attended, reasons for attendance at a specific school and if a closer appropriate school is/was available at the time of allocation.
- Distance from home to school
- Length of journey
- The nature of the route to be travelled
- Ability to travel alone or accompanied
- Parental income or whether the child or young person is in receipt of free school meals (only where applications are made under the low income category)
- Whether the child or young person has mobility problems a disability and or special educational needs not provided for by a formal statement
- Whether the child or young person has been permanently excluded or a managed transfer has been negotiated
- Any other exceptional circumstances applicable to each case

SECTION 3: The application and assessment process (Applies to all applicants)

The application process is designed to be as simple as possible whilst ensuring that full consideration is given to the specific needs of the child or young person. Parents should allow up to 30 working days from the date of application to the start of any assistance provided.

The application process is dealt with in three stages;

Stage 1: Application

The parent/carer must make a formal application for travel support before any assistance is considered. Application forms can be obtained from:

- www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200022/help_with_transport/1051/school_transport
- By phoning 020 7525 4278 for young people with a statement of special educational needs or 020 7525 5337 for all other young people

Each application will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt of the application. An initial evaluation of the application will then determine whether assistance is likely to be approved, declined or whether further assessment is required. The parent/carer will be informed in writing of the outcome of the application.

Stage 2: Assessment

This stage will include the gathering and evaluation of written evidence and family circumstances. This may include a home visit, consultation with the child or young person's school/caseworkers and any other relevant specialists.

This stage will normally be completed within 15 working days following stage 1 depending on the complexity of the circumstances. It is possible at this stage that the application may be declined.

Stage 3: Implementation

It is for the Council to decide what type of travel assistance would suitably meet the needs for each individual child or young person. Once a decision has been made, the parent/carer will be invited in to complete the final paperwork and sign the necessary forms before the travel solution can be implemented. Assistance will normally be implemented within 10 working days following the completion of the assessment stage.

Travel assistance reviews

All children and young people's eligibility for travel assistance will be reviewed annually. In most circumstances the review will take place at the child or young person's school and parents/carers must attend the review in order for travel assistance to continue. Non-attendance may result in transport provision being ceased.

Travel assistance will also be reviewed when there is a significant change in circumstances, such as a change in home address or a change in the child or young person's needs. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the Council immediately of any changes that may affect the provision of travel assistance.

Any changes will be implemented from the beginning of the next school term, or sooner by mutual agreement.

Cessation of support

The Council has the right to review and remove travel assistance from students where it is proven that assistance was obtained via a fraudulent application or where the child or young person's individual circumstances have changed which results in either the child or young person no longer being eligible for support or has been assessed as not requiring such support. It may also cease on the written request of the parent who, if necessary has made alternative arrangements for their child or young person's travel to school.

The Council expects children and young people to behave appropriately on transport and must ensure health and safety of all passengers and staff is maintained. Any behavioural issues whilst on transport will be dealt with by the Council in conjunction with the child or young person's school. Transport will be suspended whilst an investigation is undertaken. In such circumstances, it will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure the child or young person attends school in the interim period.

Ongoing or serious behavioural issues may result in transport being permanently removed.

Parents/carers must ensure their child is ready at the pick up point by the allocated time in the mornings and must be ready to receive their child at the end of the day. Where a parent/carer is repeatedly not ready in the mornings or not available in the evenings, transport may be removed.

Transport charges for children or young people that are NOT eligible

In some circumstances parents/carers may wish to pay a charge to Southwark Council in order to receive travel support for their child if they do not meet eligibility criteria contained within this policy.

Examples may include but are not limited to:

- A sibling of an eligible child or young person attending the same school
- An child or young person whose application has been rejected but whose parent/carer wishes them to be transported

Where the Council agrees to transport children or young people on a vehicle who are not eligible for travel assistance under this policy, it will only be where a space is available on a pre-existing round, subject to a risk assessment and the charge will be worked out on a 'per seat' basis.

The Council cannot guarantee the availability of a seat on a round and where transport is provided it may be withdrawn where it is required for an eligible child or young person following 10 working days notice.

Appeals

If an application for travel assistance is not approved by the Council, or the parent/carer disagrees with the type of assistance being offered, parent/carers have a right of appeal.

The appeal should be made on the appropriate appeals form within 14 days of the decision letter being received by the parents/carers.

Appeals forms can be obtained from:

- www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200022/help_with_transport/1051/school_transport
- By phoning 020 7525 4278 for young people with a statement of special educational needs or 020 7525 5337 for all other young people

Appeals are administered in 2 stages:

Stage 1: Review of evidence

Within 5 working days of the appeal form being received, the parent/carer will be sent confirmation that their appeal has been received and that their appeal is under review.

Further evidence may be requested to support the appeal and consultation with case workers and professional bodies may be required. Stage 1 appeals are decided by the appropriate Head of Service and parents should aim to receive their decision letter within 10 days of their appeals form being received.

Stage 2: Independent review of evidence

If the parent/carer remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they should notify the Council in writing within 14 days of receiving their stage 1 appeal decision.

The appeal will then be considered independently of the service and will involve consideration of all evidence gathered and the reasons for the decision being made. Parents should aim to receive their decision letter within 20 days of their appeal being received.

During the appeals process no new travel assistance will be provided or in the case of existing arrangements, no change will be implemented.

Complaints

Once travel assistance has been agreed any concerns regarding the daily provision of the service should be made in the first instance to the Council's transport provider, parents/carers will be given these details.

Any formal complaints should be handled through the Council's formal complaints process by contacting the Children's Services Complaints Unit:

Children's Services Complaint Unit
PO Box 64529
London SE1P 5LX
Tel: 020 7525 3681
email: sscomplaints@southwark.gov.uk

Definitions:

Child looked after: A child in public care (looked after child) means a person under the age of 18 years who is provided by social services with accommodation by agreement with their parents/carers (Section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or who is the subject of a care order under Part IV of the Act. Children who are looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements (such as respite) are excluded.

Exceptional circumstances: the following are examples of exceptional circumstances: a child who is statemented at pre-school age, a student has been temporarily moved out of their home due to violence or eviction, the child has been excluded and a new place has been negotiated, a managed move has been negotiated, pupils in their final year of primary or secondary school who move houses. Each case will be considered on its own merits, examples listed here are not exhaustive and do not automatically qualify for travel assistance.

Home address: the address where the child resides. Where a child spends time with both parents/carers in separate homes and both have parental responsibility, the LA will need to establish where the majority of school nights (Sunday to Thursday) are spent and treat that as the home address.

Low income families: Children whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credit or children who are entitled to free school meals. Children receiving free school meals as part of the Southwark free, healthy school meals for all children project but who would be otherwise not eligible are excluded.

Qualifying school: A qualifying school includes community, foundation and voluntary aided schools, community or foundation special schools, non-maintained special schools, City Technology Colleges and Academies.

Standard journey times prior to assistance being offered: The Council considers reasonable standard journey times to be 45 minutes for a child of primary school age and 75 minutes for a child of secondary school age.

Statutory school age: children aged between five years of age up to the last day of the school year when the child reaches 16 years of age.

Statutory walking distance: statutory walking distance is two miles for pupils aged up to eight and three miles for those aged eight and over. The statutory walking distance is measured by the shortest route along which a child accompanied as necessary may walk with reasonable safety. Walking routes are measured using Southwark's approved computerised Geographical Information System (GIS).

Appendix A: Vehicle Transport Service Standards and Expectations

The School Travel Team are responsible for arranging and overseeing all methods of travel assistance provided to pupils with or without a Statement of SEN. This includes, but is not limited to;

- Processing of new applications
- Contacting parents/carers following the assessment process
- Implementing agreed assistance i.e.: issuing travel cards/ allocating suitable routes
- Reviews of travel assistance
- Managing provider contracts
- Managing framework contract with licensed taxi providers
- Day to day amendments/queries relating to travel assistance
- Monitoring of transport providers
- Investigating and responding to complaints

These service standards act as a guidance and clarity for the service users to whom Travel Assistance has been granted. Underlying these standards is the principle that, if Southwark Council agrees to provide travel assistance, it will be provided in a safe and cost effective manner, taking account of the child's specific needs and with regard to the best use of the Council's resources.

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1) Vehicles

- All transport will be provided in accordance with contractual standards and legislation.
- All vehicles will be properly licensed
- Regular monitoring of quality and service standards will take place on all vehicles.
- Vehicles will have specialist wheelchair access and wheelchair restraint systems where necessary.
- All vehicles will be road worthy, clean inside and out, fitted with seat belts and carry emergency equipment i.e. fire extinguisher and first aid kit and any other equipment/notices required by law, e.g.: children sign on front and back of vehicle.

2) Service Personnel

Pupil Support Assistants (PSA)

- The Authority may provide a PSA for children who have severe physical or learning difficulties, challenging behaviours and anti-social behaviours where the child's safety requires it, this will be determined during the assessment phase.
- Where large numbers of children who fulfil the eligibility criteria travel together, more than one PSA may be required per vehicle.
- The need for a PSA must be reviewed annually as part of the annual review. PSA's will not be provided where parents make their own travel arrangements.
- Where provided, the Authority will make every effort to ensure the same PSA is used on a regular basis. This may not always be possible due to staff shortages, illness, holidays, retirement and staff resignations. Changes may also be necessary from time to time to ensure the efficient use of resources.
- The PSA should assist children on and off the vehicle and ensure they are seated safely while the vehicle is moving.
- PSAs should deliver children to a member of school staff on arrival at the school so that at no time are children left unattended on the vehicle.
- If the PSA has a concern for any child in their care, the headteacher and Transport Supervisors should be informed.
- PSAs are not authorised to leave a child with anyone other than their parent/carer, or named responsible adult (16+) identified in advance to the School Travel Team in writing by the parent/carer.
- All PSAs will have enhanced CRB clearance.
- PSAs must carry and display suitable identification at all times.
- PSAs must adhere to the Council's no smoking policy
- PSAs have strict instructions not to enter into any personal arrangements with parents/carers, including changing pick up or drop off points without consulting the Council.

Drivers

- Drivers must carry and display suitable identification at all times.
- Drivers must have enhanced CRB clearance.
- Drivers must, as far as possible, be punctual.
- Drivers must ensure that all wheelchairs are securely clamped.
- Drivers must treat parents and children with respect and avoid confrontations.
- Drivers must report any bad behaviour of passengers to their supervisor and the School Travel Team.
- Drivers must ensure that all passenger harness and restraint straps are properly adjusted and fitted securely before the journey commences.
- Drivers must adhere to the Council's no smoking policy.
- The driver is to stop, as close to the pick-up point as traffic conditions will safely permit.
- The driver is not allowed to sound his horn to alert parents that they are there.
- Neither drivers nor PSAs are responsible for taking a child across the road if a parent/carer is waiting on the other side.

- Every effort will be made to ensure the same driver is used on a regular basis. This may not always be possible due to illness, holidays, retirement and staff resignations. Changes may also be necessary from time to time to ensure the efficient use of resources.

3) Health and safety

- All wheelchairs and buggies must be crash tested and transportable. If you have any queries regarding this you should contact the Wheelchair Service on 0203 049 7731.
- If your child travels in a transportable buggy or wheelchair please make sure that it is in good repair. For further advice please contact the Wheelchair Maintenance Service on 0203 049 7700.
- Transport providers are asked to ensure that all children are covered by a Risk Assessment, which provides staff with information about the children in their care. The majority of children will fall within the boundaries of a generic risk assessment for transport, however in more complex cases a specific risk assessment will be written.
- Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) are trained in basic First Aid and receive additional training specific to the child's needs where necessary. However, in the event of an emergency, PSAs and Drivers will contact 999 emergency services.
- No transport staff are permitted to administer medication to any passenger unless they are a medically trained nurse or carer.
- It is vital that parents/carers advise the School Travel Team of any health concerns that may affect their child whilst on transport. Information regarding allergies, for example, even if not thought to be directly relevant to transport.
- Children are not permitted to consume food or drinks whilst on board a vehicle. This standard will be enforced to ensure the continuing safety of children whilst travelling.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that arrangements are in place AM and PM to ensure the safe handover of their child.
- In the case of extreme weather conditions, transport services will not operate. Decisions are taken on the day by 6.30am and parents will be alerted via a text message.

4) Journey times

- The Council will endeavour to ensure that pupils arrive at school fit to learn and recognises that the length of the journey to school can affect this aim. We expect the maximum length of journey for a pupil to schools within Southwark will be no more than 75 minutes.
- Journey times will be longer where pupils are travelling to schools and colleges outside of Southwark.
- On occasions there may be factors outside the Authority's control e.g. unforeseen traffic congestion or bad weather that may affect journey times.
- In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the Authority to vary planned routes and this may affect pick up and drop off times. Where this is the case the Authority will endeavour to contact parents/carers in advance to advise them.
- Pick up and drop off times affect journey times and will therefore not be altered to fit parental circumstances (for example, a parent's work schedule)

5) Vehicle waiting times (Mornings)

- Parents/carers are expected to be available at an agreed pick up point, at an agreed time to meet transport in the morning.
- To keep journey times down to an absolute minimum and ensure that all pupils arrive at school on time, all vehicles will adhere to strict waiting time limits as follows:
 - a) If a child is not ready, or not at the agreed pick up point, the vehicle will wait for a maximum of 3 minutes after the agreed pick up time and then move off. If this means the child is unable to travel on the organised vehicle, the parent/carer is then responsible for ensuring that the child gets to school on time.
 - b) If the vehicle arrives early for a pick up it will wait until the official set time and then a maximum of 3 minutes before moving off. If this means the child is unable to travel on the

organised vehicle, the parent/carer is then responsible for ensuring that the child gets to school on time.

- c) If the vehicle is running late for a pick up, the crew are expected to advise parents/carers of the delay as soon as possible
- d) When a vehicle arrives at a pick up or drop off point, the horn will **not** be sounded. Parents/carers are expected to have their child ready and waiting to board the vehicle.

6) Vehicle waiting times (afternoons)

- Parents/carers must be available at the nominated drop off point, at the regular drop off time, every afternoon to meet their child.
- Parents/carers must provide an emergency address, located within Southwark, where their child can be dropped off.
- In the event that a parent/carer is unable to meet their child at the specified time and location, the Authorities After School Procedure will be initiated.
- At times, parents/carers may need to make emergency alternative arrangements for the handover of their child to a nominated responsible adult, either at the home address or at an alternative address within Southwark. In these cases it is the parent/carer's responsibility to notify the School Travel Team and make suitable arrangements to ensure their child's safety.
- In circumstances where vehicles are delayed or late arriving the parent/carer should contact the School Travel Team. The team will take steps to directly address the situation with the provider.
- Where no responsible adult is available to meet a child from transport on more than two occurrences, travel assistance will be reviewed and may be suspended or permanently withdrawn. In such circumstances parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school

7) Absences

- Where a child cannot attend school on any particular day due to illness it is the parents/carers responsibility to;
 - a) Contact the School Travel Team the day before travel is required, if it is known that the child will be off school the next day or;
 - b) Contact the School Travel Team as early as possible in the morning of the day their child is due to travel, if the child has only just begun to show signs of illness.
- When travel assistance is cancelled due to illness, with no specified timeframe, **it will only be reinstated** when the parent/carer notifies the School Travel Team. This advice should be given on **the day before** the child is due to return to school.
- Travel assistance will be reviewed, and may be suspended for a period of time or permanently withdrawn, if it becomes apparent that vehicles are not being cancelled with sufficient advance warning. Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school in such circumstances.

8) Extra journeys

- The provision of travel assistance extends only to journeys to and from school at the beginning and the end of the school day.
- Travel assistance is not provided on any other occasions, for example travel between schools, sports facilities, other curriculum activities and medical appointments.
- There are some instances where this can be waived for example, where a child has to attend an after school class as part of their education, or related work experience / examinations at a different location other than school. This will be agreed on an individual basis and for a specified time period.
- In cases of exclusion, illness etc, if a child has to go home during the course of the school day the parent / carer would be responsible for transport.
- Where a child attends more than one school, they may require additional transport. The school, which is the child's main school, will be responsible for arranging and meeting the cost of such transport.

- Where a child is based full time at a school, but visits other schools or a Pupil Referral Unit, the school where the pupil is 'on roll' will be responsible for arranging transport and for the cost of such transport. Parents/carers should, in these circumstances, address any issues directly to the child's school

9) Travel Assistance for parents/carers to attend meetings/events

- Where a parent/carer is required to attend school for a meeting/event, it is their responsibility to make their own travel arrangements. However, subject to the following conditions, parents/carers may be allowed to travel on their child's vehicle:
 - (a) Permission is granted by the School Travel Team prior to the journey (**this is essential for insurance purposes**);
 - (b) There is a spare seat available on the vehicle;
 - (c) The vehicle is not diverting from its regular route.
 - (d) There are no other children on the vehicle

10) Travel to residential schools

- Children normally attend residential schools in the following categories, weekly, 38 week, and 52 weeks. Where a child attends a weekly boarding and meets the transport criteria, transport will be weekly to and from school. Where the placement is a 38 week boarder, Transport will be provided at the beginning of term, beginning of half term, end of half term and end of term. Where placement is a 52 week there will be a one off transport provision to the placement until the young person leaves the placement permanently.
- Where a parent wishes their child to come home outside any of the above times it will be their responsibility to arrange travel.
- In general; children will be picked up from their home address. However, in some circumstances transport will be from a central pick-up point. Children are expected to travel to the pick-up point by public transport with an accompanying adult where possible; a travel warrant will be issued to cover the cost of the journey.
- The Authority may also be willing to reimburse parents with an agreed mileage allowance where they have their own transport and have agreed to carry out this duty.
- A travel warrant could also be provided to a parent/carer and pupil to facilitate independent travel where the Authority deems it necessary or parent asks for such mode of travel.

11) Safeguarding children

- All children must be handed over to a responsible adult at the drop off address within Southwark, provided by parent/carer. Travel staff are not permitted to leave children with any person under the age of 16, or who is not an 'authorised' adult.
- Prior to starting transport, Southwark School Travel Team will request details of any authorised adult and/or emergency contact details for any person who a child can be handed over to.
- A child should never be removed from a vehicle anywhere on a route other than at the normal setting down point for that journey. The exception to this would be long distance journeys making pre-agreed rest stops or in emergencies.
- All transport staff are instructed to report any incidents, concerns or queries to the School Travel Team. The team will then liaise with parents/carers, schools and colleagues in Social Care where appropriate.

12) Behaviour Standards

- Children, parents, schools, transport operators and the Council all have a role to play in ensuring the appropriate behaviour of children on school transport.
- Whilst PSAs have a responsibility for safeguarding children and ensuring discipline on the

vehicle during the course of the journey, schools will take whatever steps possible to ensure the appropriate behaviour of their children on home to school transport; and will take appropriate action should incidents of poor behaviour be reported. Appropriate action may include the use of sanctions, written warnings and exclusion from transport. Parents are also expected to take responsibility for their child's behaviour whilst with a PSA.

- Where a child's behaviour is directly as a result of a known and diagnosed medical condition and it is agreed by medical advisors and teachers that the child has no control over their behaviour, the Council will undertake a risk assessment and will consider making alternative arrangements, for example, providing the parent/carer with a mileage allowance or direct payments to make their child's own travel arrangements.
- It is however recognised, that general poor behaviour, not directly attributable to a child's particular special educational needs and circumstances, cannot be taken into account when determining an appropriate safe travel plan. It is therefore paramount to have and to enforce clear standards of acceptable behaviour in the interests of ensuring a safe journey for all pupils and staff as well as other road users.
- All reasonable adjustments will be made in cases where behaviour problems persist and it is judged that the safety of the passengers is endangered. Where reasonable adjustments can be made to deal with behaviour, transport can be withdrawn in individual cases and the Authority will provide resources for parents to carry out this duty.
- In consultation with schools, the Authority may be required to instigate permanent or fixed periods of exclusion from transport. Parents/carers will be responsible for transporting their children during any period of exclusion and ensuring their child's regular attendance at school.