

**Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy**

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## **Introduction**

This document sets out Surrey County Council's Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy and describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as required by the Education Act 1996 and subsequent legislation and guidance.

The policy explains the criteria for eligibility for travel assistance for pupils to their school or college for children of statutory school age (5-16 years old) and for young people aged 16 to 19 and 19 to 25. It describes how parents and carers can apply for travel assistance and how decisions are made. It sets out how parents and carers may appeal against decisions that they believe do not comply with this policy.

## **Policy statement**

Surrey County Council is committed to ensuring that all pupils have a great start to life, are safe and healthy and have access to high quality education so that they are able to achieve their full potential. The Children and Families Act 2014 commits partners to work together to develop services which strengthen the abilities and resilience of children and their families to be independent.

The Council is also committed to meeting the educational needs of as many children and young people as possible within local schools. In many cases, this will mean that pupils can walk or cycle to school with their parents or carers. This policy sets out how we will help the small number of pupils who find it difficult to travel to school or college without some assistance.

As a Council we want to make sure we continue to deliver our statutory responsibilities for home to school transport to meet the travel needs of children and young people, enabling them to access their place of education. The Council acknowledges that without this service some of the County's children and young people would be unable to access their school or college, especially those who have significant additional needs, are isolated within the community, or deemed extremely vulnerable.

Engagement with young people with special educational needs in Surrey confirmed that young people value independence highly, and that they want their parents, schools and the services that support them to help them prepare for adulthood, including continued access to education, employment opportunities and access to essential services and activities in the community. The ability to travel independently is important to them now to attend school, participate in community life and socialise with friends; it is also fundamental to their future ambitions.

We want to support parents and carers to fulfil their responsibility to ensure their school-aged children attend school regularly and to make any necessary arrangements to ensure that they attend school. Those children and young people not in receipt of travel assistance from the Council can use a wide range of forms of travel in Surrey, accompanied as necessary, including bus, train, concessionary fares, walking and cycling. We also want to support schools to promote safe routes to school and safe travel skills through their regular curriculum.

### **3. Eligibility**

#### 3.1 All pupils

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their statutory school-aged children (age 5-16) attend school regularly and to make any necessary arrangements to ensure that they attend school.

A child becomes of compulsory school age at the start of term after their fifth birthday up until the last day of the academic year in which they are in year 11. This applies to both children with and without an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

There are four core categories of eligible children set out in law:

- statutory walking distances
- unsafe walking routes
- extended rights
- special educational needs, disability and mobility problems.

Ordinarily and in accordance with the Council's statutory duty, children under the age of 5 will not be entitled to travel assistance between their home and school. Where circumstances exist where the Council determines that travel assistance is necessary it may apply its discretionary powers on a case by case basis. For further details refer to section 5.

For pupils in year 12 and above (post 16 year olds), there is no statutory requirement on the Council to provide free transport to their school or college. It is expected that young people in Post 16 education will use existing travel schemes to support access to their education placement. More information about existing schemes and discretionary support is detailed in section 6 for those aged 16 – 19, and section 7 for 19 – 25 young persons with an EHCP.

#### 3.2 Statutory walking distances

Surrey County Council, in accordance with its statutory duty, will provide free home to school transport for children of compulsory school age to the nearest suitable school from their home address who meet the 'qualifying distance' criteria which are:

- 2 miles or more for children below the age of eight, measured by the shortest walking distance between the home and the school
- 3 miles or more for children aged eight and above, measured by the shortest walking distance between the home and the school

Children who live between 2 and 3 miles from their school will cease to be entitled to transport from the start of the term following their eighth birthday. This will be implemented for September 2021 (academic year 2021/22).

If the child/family qualify for free school meals or they are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit then please refer to section 3.4 for more details regarding Extended Rights eligibility.

For children with special needs or disability, if it is deemed unreasonable to expect them to walk to school (accompanied by an adult as necessary), then the distance criteria does not apply and they are entitled to free school travel regardless of the distance they live from school. See section 3.5 for more details.

### 3.3 Unsafe walking routes

Where a child is not deemed eligible for transport to their nearest qualifying school because it is under the relevant distance threshold and the parent/carer believes the child is unable to walk the assessed route safely (accompanied by an adult as necessary) due to the nature of the route, they should write to Surrey's Home to School Transport team outlining the aspect of the route they believe to be unsafe.

Safe Walking routes are then inspected by the Council's Safer Travel Team using the 'Road Safety GB Guidelines on Assessment of Walked Routes to School'.

Where a route previously considered to be unavailable and becomes available (for example through the provision of a new footpath), transport will no longer be provided to any new applicants for transport assistance. Those applicants who have been entitled to transport due to an unavailable route that has become available will be provided with transport until the end of the academic year in which the route is re-assessed or given one full terms notice, whichever is longest, before transport will be withdrawn.

### 3.4 Extended rights

Statutory entitlement is extended to children from low income groups. Children from low income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals, or those families who are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC).

Children above the age of 8, but under the age of 11, from low income families will be entitled to travel assistance to their nearest suitable school if the shortest walking distance between their home and the school is more than two miles.

Children aged 11 and over (years 7 – 11) from low income families will be entitled to travel assistance if they attend one of their three nearest suitable schools where they live between two miles (measured by the shortest walking distance) and 6 miles (measured by the shortest road route) from their school.

When a child cannot be offered a place at the nearest school to the home address, the Council will, subject to the criteria set within this policy and the qualifying distance being met, provide transport to the next nearest school with space to admit. For transport to be provided in this particular instance the parent must provide evidence that they have applied for and been refused a place at the school which is the nearest school for their home address and any other schools closer than the school offering admission.

Children aged 11 and over (years 7 - 11) from low income families who are attending their nearest designated faith school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief will also be entitled to travel assistance if their school is more than 2 miles (measured by the shortest walking distance) but not more than 15 miles (measured by the shortest road route) from their home.

When considering whether a faith school is preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, Surrey County Council will take into account the nature of other schools that may have been named as higher preferences on the application form. For an application for travel assistance to be agreed under this section, the expectation will be that the school that is preferred on the grounds of religion or belief will be named above any non-faith schools that have been named on the application form.

Parents must provide supporting evidence regarding their genuine adherence to their religion or belief and this will normally be confirmed by asking their minister of religion to sign the application form.

### 3.5 Special educational needs, disability and mobility problems

In addition to the eligibility set out in sections 3.2 and 3.4, for children of compulsory school age with special education needs, a disability or mobility problem, whether in mainstream or special provision, an entitlement to home to school transport exists where the following criteria is satisfied:

A child with an EHCP attends their nearest suitable school\* and qualifies for home to school transport under the statutory walking distances (section 3.2) outlined previously within this policy.

In addition to the above, where a child's SEN or mobility difficulties mean he or she cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school even when accompanied by a parent, transport can be provided even if the distance criteria are not met.

\*For those children with an EHCP, the nearest suitable school will be the school that **can** meet the child's needs and not the school that **best** meets the child's needs. Where a parent/ carer exercises parental preference in choosing a school further away than the nearest suitable school, the Council can name that school but state that this is not the nearest suitable school. Under this circumstance, the child is not eligible for transport and the parent takes on all financial and practical responsibility of getting their child to and from school.

Where a child held an EHCP up to the age of 16, and progresses on to attend a Further Education College or sixth form, they will, upon application, be assessed against the Post 16 policy (see section 6 and 7 for further details).

## 4. Application Process

### 4.1 How to Apply

Once a parent/carer has received an offer of a school place and believes their child is eligible for assistance with travel to school they can apply by submitting an online application form on Surrey County Council's website at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport).

If a child changes school or moves home address, either for the start of the academic year or during the year, a new application form must be submitted for a new eligibility assessment to be undertaken.

### 4.2 Assessing travel assistance entitlement for compulsory school age children

In all cases, a child/young person must be attending the nearest suitable school. This is defined as a school that has spaces available that provides education appropriate to the age, gender, ability and aptitude of the child, and appropriate to the child's EHCP where one exists.

In the case of entry to the junior stage of education, a qualifying school will either be a junior school or an all through primary school with a separate published admissions number at 7+.

Types of suitable schools considered under this policy are:

- Community, foundation, trust, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- Academies or alternative provision academies
- Free schools
- Community or foundation special schools
- Non-maintained special schools
- Pupil referral units
- Maintained nursery schools
- City technology colleges and city colleges for the technology of the arts, university technical colleges

For mainstream applications processed during the normal school admissions round, a school will be determined as having a vacancy if a place would have been offered according to the allocations made on the national offer day, assuming the parent either made or could reasonably have made an application. For applications made after the normal admissions round and those made during the school year, a school will be determined as having a vacancy if, at the point of processing the child's school application, a place could have been allocated to the child.

When determining which qualifying school is the nearest to the home address for travel assistance, distances will be measured by the shortest road route. This assessment will exclude walking routes, such as footpaths, bridleways and pathways, and will not take into account whether the road route is safe to walk along.

In some circumstances, children may not be attending their nearest suitable school from their home address when the road route is measured. If the school attended is the nearest school measured as the crow flies as defined in the admissions arrangements for the school then a discretionary extension will be applied and travel assistance provided, subject to the distance thresholds appropriate to the age of the child being met.

If, due to a medical condition or disability, a mainstream child has to attend a particular school that is not the nearest qualifying school but is over the statutory walking distance, then travel assistance will be agreed to the allocated school. Medical evidence must be provided that demonstrates why the child needs to attend that school.

Where a school operates on multiple or split sites, the assessment of nearest qualifying school will take account of the sites used to prioritise admissions (as defined in each school's admission arrangements), regardless of which year groups are educated at which site or which site a child might attend.

If for any reason a school chooses to educate children on a temporary site, the assessment of nearest school will disregard the temporary site and will instead use the intended permanent site of the school or, if that has not yet been determined, the current main site of the school. However, see the next section for confirmation of the site to be used to assess the home to school walking distance.

Where an out of County school is identified as a child's nearest qualifying school and the distance of the walking route to that school would mean that transport would still need to be provided, free home to school transport will be made available to Surrey children attending their nearest geographical Surrey school (measured by the shortest road route), subject to the distance thresholds appropriate to the age of the child being met.

#### 4.3 How walking distance is measured

Walking distances are calculated using the shortest available walking route from the home address to school. If families believe that the walking route measured is not available to walk they should request a review of the route. See section 3.3 for more details.

The legal definition of an ‘available walking route’ is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk and walk with reasonable safety to school.

Where a school operates on a temporary site and that school's permanent/current site is deemed to be a child's nearest qualifying school, the home to school walking distance will be measured to the school's temporary site to determine if the child lives over the statutory walking distance and is eligible for travel assistance. Eligibility will be reassessed at the point a child ceases to be educated at the temporary site.

Distances will be measured using the Admissions & Transport Team’s Geographical Information System from the address point of the pupil’s house, as set by Ordnance Survey, to either the nearest school gate available for pupils to use when measuring to a Surrey school, or the address point of the school property, as set by Ordnance Survey, when measuring to a school outside Surrey.

#### 4.4 Route Safety Assessment

Where a parent/carer believes the assessed walking route to be unsafe, they should write to Surrey’s Home to School Transport team outlining the aspect of the route they believe to be unsafe

The route will then be referred to the Safer Travel Team who will review the route using ‘Road Safety GB Guidelines on Assessment of Walked Routes to School’.

#### 4.5 Extended Rights

Parents who believe they meet the Extended Rights criteria and are therefore eligible for assistance with travel to school must include with their application evidence of the child’s entitlement to free school meals or the family’s receipt of maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC) with their application form.

A child who has been assessed as eligible for travel assistance by meeting the Extended Rights criteria will have their entitlement reviewed each academic year to ensure that the child continues to meet the necessary entitlement criteria.

If a child ceases to be eligible for free school meals or a family ceases to be entitled to the maximum level of Working Tax Credit during the academic year for which transport has been awarded, travel assistance will continue until the end of that academic year.

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

#### 4.6 Special educational needs, disability and mobility problems

Where a child with special education needs, a disability and/or mobility problems does not meet the other three eligibility criteria, but has identified specific needs/circumstances that may mean it is

unreasonable to expect the child to walk to school (accompanied by an adult as necessary), then an assessment based on their individual needs and circumstances will be undertaken.

In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk between home and school, the Council will consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and, if so, whether the child's parent or carer can reasonably be expected to accompany their child. Ordinarily, the expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a parent or carer.

When assessing entitlement for travel assistance for a child with SEND or mobility problems, the Council will consider the individual needs of each child. This may include taking professional advice from educational psychologists, medical officers and teachers and consulting with parents and carers before arriving at a final decision. Consideration will also be given to the child's physical and medical requirements including any disabilities they may have. Assessments may include face to face contact with the child. The findings and decision will be recorded on a transport assessment form.

The following factors will be taken into consideration when assessing transport entitlement:

- the age of the child
- the distance of the child from school to home
- whether the child is physically able to walk the journey to school
- whether the walking route is appropriate for the pupil and their specific needs and allows them to arrive in a fit state to be educated
- whether a child's emotional and behavioural difficulties will create a clear health and safety hazard to themselves or others on the journey to school
- the SEND of the child
- the efficient utilisation of resources
- any other individual circumstance

This is not an exhaustive list. It is not presented in any particular order and is for guidance only. Meeting one or more of the criteria does not automatically entitle a child with SEND to transport assistance.

The fact that a child has an EHCP or attends a special school does not automatically entitle him or her to transport assistance.

Eligibility for transport assistance is related to the child's needs. Assessment may take into account the need for transport assistance due to some family circumstances. This will primarily be if a child has other siblings attending schools not local to the SEN provision offered to them, or is offered SEN provision at a school which is not their local provision. These factors will be considered when determining eligibility for home to school travel assistance and deciding on the type of transport to be provided. Other family circumstances, such as parents and carers attending work or looking after other children, cannot be considered when determining eligibility.

#### 4.7 Extenuating circumstances

Recognising that the Council's discretionary powers should not be unreasonably fettered by its general policy, the Council will consider and may agree requests for home to school transport where there are considered to be extenuating circumstances that prevent a child accessing their school unless travel assistance is put in place. If the parent believes extenuating circumstances exist and assistance with travel is necessary then a transport case review form must be completed and submitted with all relevant information and evidence for consideration.

The overriding expectation is that parents should undertake their legal responsibility to get their child(ren) to and from school and as such the Council will need to be satisfied that the parent has demonstrated why they, for social, medical, financial or personal reasons cannot undertake this duty.

The determination will be based on evidence received to support the case whether transport is necessary in order for the child to receive an education. Consideration will be given as to whether the circumstances could have reasonably been foreseen by the parent/carer. For example, moving to temporary accommodation owing to flood damage cannot be foreseen, whereas choosing a school other than a child's nearest school and realising following this decision that transport is not available could be foreseen.

Where it is decided that a child does not qualify for assistance with travel based on the presented needs/circumstances then it remains the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure school attendance or consider transferring the child to a more local school.

In all cases the decision whether to exercise discretion will be taken on a case by case basis.

#### 4.8 Special consideration and appeals

Parents/carers of children who live in Surrey and who wish to appeal a decision about one of the following, may apply for their case to be considered at a transport case review:

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

During an appeal about an application for travel assistance, transport will not be provided to the child/young person. Where the appeal concerns a change to existing travel arrangements, then the previously agreed travel arrangements will continue until the review is complete.

#### **Stage one: Case review by a senior officer**

Parents/carers must complete a stage one transport case review form on which they must indicate whether they believe the original decision to be wrong or whether they wish their case to be considered as an exception to the policy. The form must be returned with details of the case within 20 working days from receipt of the original transport decision.

The written request should detail why the parent/carer believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances they believe should be considered.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the written request a senior officer, who was not involved with making the original decision, will review the case. More complex cases may sometimes exceed the 20 working day turnaround time for review.

The senior officer will write to the parent/carer, normally within five working days of the review, setting out:

- the decision reached;
- how the review was conducted;
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process;

- what factors were considered;
- the rationale for the decision reached; and
- information about how the parent/carer can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate).

Where possible, applications for review at stage one of the review process should be accompanied by independent supporting evidence such as from a GP or consultant, a social worker, the police, other local authority officers and copies of relevant court orders as appropriate.

With the exception of eligibility based on extended entitlement for families on low income, qualification for travel assistance is not means-tested, and family income will not normally be given special consideration under this review process.

When considering reviews, the following will also not normally be taken into account:

- Parent/carers' work or other commitments.
- Attendance by siblings at other schools.
- A work experience placement.
- An address other than the home address, including a childminder's address.
- Ad hoc visits to other establishments or locations.
- Out of hours clubs (e.g. breakfast club, after school activities).

### **Stage two: Case review by an independent panel**

If the parent/carer remains unhappy with the decision at stage one of the transport case review, they can complete a 'Stage 2 transport case review form' to request that their case is escalated to a panel of three Surrey County Council Members. Members on the stage two case review panel will be independent of the original decision making process and will not have had any prior involvement with the case or be connected to the school or family in question.

Requests for a stage two case review must be made within 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision.

Stage two case reviews will normally be considered within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carers request for it to be escalated. A copy of the paperwork that has been submitted to the stage two case review panel will be sent to the parent at least seven working days prior to the review.

The parent/carer will be asked to indicate on the 'Stage 2 transport case review form' whether or not they wish to attend the review to present their case verbally. An officer for the local authority will also be invited to present the local authority's case. Parent/carers are not required to attend and if they do not indicate that they wish to attend the review will be scheduled to be heard in their absence.

The stage two case review panel will give equal consideration to all case reviews whether conducted in the presence of all parties or heard in the absence of one/both parties. If the panel considers that further information is required, the case will be adjourned so that the information can be made available.

Where a parent/carer chooses to attend the stage two case review, the panel chairman will:

- welcome all parties and introduce the panel members, clerk, and officer of the local authority.
- explain the procedure, clearly and simply, including the panel's remit.
- explain that the panel has read the full written case.
- invite the applicant to briefly highlight the main points of their application.
- invite the officer for the local authority to briefly highlight the main points of the local authority's case.

The panel will seek clarification on points raised by either party if required.

Once the parent/carer and officer for the local authority have left, the panel will reach a decision as to whether to uphold or reject the review. When the panel considers its decisions, the clerk must remain with the panel solely for the purpose of offering advice on procedure or law, making reference to notes or evidence and record decisions, including the reasons for them.

The clerk to the stage two case review panel will write to the parent/carer, normally within five working days of the review, setting out:

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

### **Local Government Ombudsman**

There is a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, but only if the complainant considers that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the review has been handled. Further advice is available at [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk) or on the Local Government Ombudsman advice line on 0300 061 0614.

If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply for judicial review.

## 5. Children below the age of 5

### 5.1 Children attending Reception classes

Ordinarily and in accordance with the Council's statutory duty, children under the age of 5 will not be entitled to travel assistance between their home and school. Where circumstances exist where the Council determines that travel assistance is necessary it may apply its discretionary powers on a case by case basis. The Council makes this determination through the special consideration and appeals process set out in Section 4.8.

A child becomes of compulsory school age at the start of term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## 5.2 Pre-school children with SEND

Local authorities do not have a duty to provide or arrange free transport for children who have not yet reached compulsory school age and who are attending a pre-school setting. However, the Council will consider transport assistance applications for children below statutory school age in exceptional circumstances. The Council makes this determination through the special consideration and appeals process set out in Section 4.8.

## 6. Young people aged 16 – 19

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the local authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

### 6.1 Policy statement

The annual statement must state to what extent the arrangements make provision for facilitating attendance of disabled persons and persons with learning difficulties or disabilities at education or training. ‘Sixth form age’ refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (Years 12, 13 and 14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties or disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25 years. This policy, for ease, will separate the support which can be offered to post-16 young people into two categories, as the duties on the local authority to provide transport differ, and we want to make this transparent:

‘Post-16’ will include both learners of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 19 (the academic year in which they turn 19) or learners over 19 completing courses started before they turned 19.

‘Post-19’ will include learners aged 19 to 25 (starting from the academic year after they turn 19). This policy document specifies the support that Surrey County Council considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

All young people in Year 11 receiving travel assistance must reapply for travel support for their post-16 education or training.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

The Council will exercise its discretion to provide travel assistance for learners aged 16 to 19 where it considers that travel assistance is necessary to enable the young person to reasonably access their education or training provision.

The Council is clear that as young people with SEND approach adulthood, where appropriate transport assistance will be provided to support independence.

In assessing eligibility for students entering post-16 education and training for travel assistance, particular attention will be paid to the following criteria.

- Whether the student is currently in receipt of any funding from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and to what value
- The location of the sixth form unit or college the student would like to attend (if this is not a local provision, the local authority would need to know that the course being taken is not available locally).
- Whether the sixth form unit is an extension to the school previously attended by the student and named in their EHCP.
- The distance from the student's home to their education or training establishment and the journey time.
- Whether the young person has SEND and/or mobility difficulties which would impede their access to their educational placement, either independently or otherwise, for example, a wheelchair user.
- Whether the young person has SEND which would make it unsafe for them to travel independently.
- Whether the public transport journey to the nearest suitable placement is too complex for the young person to be expected to travel independently.

## 6.2 Financial contributions

Where it is agreed that additional assistance is required, the local authority will ask students or their parents/carers to contribute towards transport costs. In academic year 2020/21 those costs are as follows:

- £543.30 for the academic year for students whose families are in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit and /or who continue to meet the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals; students in care; care leavers; those on Income Support/Universal Credit in their own right; disabled young people who receive Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit and either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their name, or
- £751.50 for the academic year for all other students.

## 7. Young people aged 19 – 25

The post-19 (19 to 25) Home to School Travel Policy will be focused upon a needs-led approach in which the individual needs of each young adult are assessed to inform the appropriate form of travel support, as we move away from standard provision in favour of a policy which recognises that young people are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than pupils of statutory school age.

The post-19 (19 to 25) transport powers held by the Council apply to young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged between 19 and 25 inclusive who have an education health and care plan.

The Council will consider assistance with travel is necessary to enable young adults with EHCPs to maintain attendance at their education placement. If it is identified that assistance is necessary then there would be no charge/financial contribution expected from the young adult.

For post-19 students starting a new course, you must also evidence why it is necessary for the Council and not the student to make travel arrangements. To assess this and understand the individual circumstances, we would need to know:

- What other arrangements you have considered or tried and why they are not suitable
- If there is a family member or carer who is willing and able to transport the student and if not, why it would not be possible or reasonable for them to do so
- Whether the student is in receipt of higher rate mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance, the purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, with severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outside. We would normally expect this benefit to be fully utilised and if there are any factors limiting its use you should provide details of them.
- Whether there is a 'motability' vehicle for which the student may or may not be the driver.
- Any other needs or circumstances that you consider need to be taken into account and the Council consider any recent supporting evidence that you provide

Each request will be assessed on a case by case basis, considering the law, Council policy and any supporting information provided.

#### **8. Children attending schools on grounds of religion or belief**

Ordinarily assistance with travel to a faith school will only be provided if it is the nearest suitable school. If parental preference results in children's attendance at a faith school when there are suitable schools nearer to home, then no travel assistance will normally be provided. However, travel assistance may be provided if children meet the Extended Rights eligibility category criteria then assistance to a faith school which is not the nearest suitable school may be considered (see section 3.4 for more details)

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

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

#### **9. Travel assistance options**

##### **9.1 Forms of travel assistance**

The Council will review the travel needs of all eligible children and decide the most appropriate form of assistance that will be provided. The form of travel offered will reflect the most appropriate use of public funds to ensure cost effective provision is in place, whilst also ensuring that any agreed specific requirements, such as medical/mobility or health needs are also taken into account where necessary.

In accordance with national guidance a journey to school for eligible children should be suitable, safe and reasonably stress free to enable the children to arrive at school ready for a day of study. To this end it is considered reasonable that journey times for children are as follows:

- 45 minutes for primary aged pupils.
- 75 minutes for secondary aged pupils.

However, it is recognised that adhering to journey times may not always be possible particularly in rural areas. It may be deemed acceptable for a trip to exceed these journey times if it is considered that the additional time does not place undue stress, strain or difficulty on the pupil, which would prevent them from benefitting from the education.

Where children with special educational needs, disability or mobility problems are present then journey times may sometimes need to be longer and more complex, although the Council will ensure that it does not extend routes for such children unnecessarily with appropriate measures in place to address any implications for doing so.

Subject to meeting the eligibility criteria of this policy, the following assistance will be considered:

- A free bus or train pass.
- A seat on a school coach.
- Where a Surrey travel pass is not appropriate, such as where a child is travelling to an out of County school, parents can claim for reimbursement of the cost for their child to travel to school by bus or train. Parents will be asked to submit a claim form at the end of each term and evidence of the cost of the tickets purchased must be submitted. The refund will be for the lowest equivalent public transport rate between the pupil's home and the school.
- Independent Travel Training
- Travel Allowance – For children with an EHCP
- Where reimbursement is the most cost effective method of providing home to school travel assistance, for example where no public transport service or contracted vehicle is available, parents who take their child to school by car may claim a petrol allowance for the journeys undertaken whilst the child is on board. The mileage rates to be used will be set in line with the Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rates that are designed to cover fuel and running costs for each mile of travel. The mileage to be used will be the shortest road route from the home address to the school. For car users taking more than one child, only a single application will be considered per family.
- Shared contract transport vehicle (coach, minibus, taxi) using collection point
- Shared contract transport vehicle (coach, minibus, taxi) using home collection
- Other bespoke travel options that enable travel and the development of travel skills and independence e.g. Travel Buddy

Taxis will only be provided if there is no alternative mode of transport which provides a suitable journey to school or if a child's medical condition and/or disability means that he/she is unable to travel using the alternative modes of transport that are available

No bus/train tickets will be issued for part journeys of one mile or less unless that route has been deemed to be an unsafe walking route or unless a child cannot walk the distance due to special educational needs, disability or mobility problems.

Provision will be reviewed periodically and if a more economical mode of transport becomes available then the parent may be given notice of a change to the mode of transport.

## **9.2 Travel allowance**

This is an allowance that can be provided by Surrey County Council to parents of children with an EHCP and who are eligible for travel assistance.

A parent may choose to accept the travel allowance in lieu of arranged travel assistance by the Council. This enables families to make their own arrangements to facilitate travel and access to education. A travel allowance will only be offered where it is less expensive than any alternative form of travel assistance.

Any arrangements made by the parent using the travel allowance are the responsibility of the parent.

The travel allowance is tiered based on the shortest straight line distance between the home and the school, as follows:

| <b>Direct distance<br/>(miles)</b> | <b>Annual payment<br/>5 days a week (10<br/>trips)</b> | <b>Annual payment<br/>5 days a week<br/>(mornings only)</b> | <b>Annual payment<br/>3 days per week (6<br/>trips)</b> |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 0 – 5.99                           | 1,600  | 800   | 1,280   |
| 6.00 – 10.99                       | 2,700  | 1,350   | 2,160   |
| 11.00 – 15.99                      | 4,200  | 2,100   | 3,360   |
| 16.00 plus                         | 5,000  | 2,500   | 4,000   |

The option to take up the independent travel allowance for certain days of the week or mornings only, enables parents to work collaboratively with Surrey County Council. Where this is possible, the Council will provide travel assistance to cover the journeys that parents are unable to complete. However where this applies the Council expects parents to undertake the routes they can complete consistently and the parent will need to ensure all journeys are covered.

Where there are two or more children living at the same address and attending the same school and the independent travel allowance has been agreed for one child, additional travel assistance will not be provided for the other children as all children would be expected to travel together.

If the parent transports siblings to different schools the allowance due would be based on the straight line distance between home and school A plus the straight line distance between school A and school B.

The travel allowance is paid over 10 months (October to July) if the child is entitled from the start of the school year. Parents will need to nominate a bank account before any payments are made.

The travel allowance is based on the child's attendance being over 80% for the full year. Attendance records will be requested from the school at the end of each term. If the child's attendance shows poor attendance in the Autumn or Spring terms than the parent may be transferred to the standard travel reimbursement rate instead of the travel allowance. Alternatively, if the child's attendance is below 80% than the final month's payment will be reduced.

If a parent is in receipt of the travel allowance but is temporarily unable to transport their child to school due to a short-term illness or medical condition, temporary assistance may be provided. However, this may take up to ten working days to put in place.

## **10 Independent Travel**

### **10.1 Independent Travel Training (ITT)**

Local authorities have a duty to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 25 in education and training. Independent travel training aims to achieve this.

Independent travel is a valuable skill for preparing for adulthood, an essential employability skill, and provides greater opportunities for young people, not least increasing confidence in their abilities and reducing their sense of reliance on family members.

In line with the Council's aims and objectives to support independence and prepare young people for adulthood, and where appropriate employment, ITT will be expanded as an option from April 2020. The Council will identify young people who could benefit from ITT and contact their families to invite them to take part in ITT.

The Council will also contact young people and their families who will be transitioning from compulsory education into Post16 and above to invite them to take part in ITT.

An ITT assessment will be carried out in the home, with the support of the family, to confirm the suitability of the young person for the ITT programme, taking into account the following criteria:

- Existing level of independent travel skills
- The likelihood of the pupil being eligible for SEN transport under the 16 to 19 policy
- The age of the pupil
- The distance between home and school
- The SEND of the pupil
- The route which the young person would need to undertake
- Journey times using public transport and the complexity of the journey
- The frequency of the journeys required

This assessment would take place before the pupil undertakes the ITT programme, which would last for approximately four to six weeks. During the programme, the pupil will travel to and from their education or training provision each day with their dedicated one to one ITT trainer.

During the period when a pupil is taking part in the ITT, this will be their travel assistance offer. At the end of the ITT programme, the Council will review the pupil's progress with the family to decide if it is appropriate for the pupil to continue to travel independently. If it is not appropriate for the pupil to travel independently, their previous transport offer will be reinstated. Although it is expected that the majority of young people would benefit from ITT, it is however acknowledged that for some young people, due to the nature of their SEND, ITT will not be appropriate.

### **10.2 Collection points**

Collection points are similar to bus stops, where the Council identifies designated pick-up and drop-off locations for the pupil to meet the bus or taxi rather than offering a door-to-door service. This

reduces the time needed for the route to pick up the pupils and supports children and young people to become more independent and better prepares them for adulthood.

Where the introduction of collection points is being considered, the Council will formally carry out a 28 day consultation with the parents and carers already on those routes affected by this potential change in service. Achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some children and young people with the most complex SEND needs, and in some cases parents' own mobility or disability may impact on them being able to accompany their child to a collection point. Where this is the case, the ambition for the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own children's transport where this is desired and appropriate. In such circumstances, the Council will carefully consider and assess the individual child's needs as well as the mobility and or disability of their parents.

Where a collection point is allocated, it is the parent's or carer's responsibility to make sure that their child travels to and from the collection point and transfers to and from the vehicle safely.

**Parents who are temporarily unable to take their child to a collection point:** no temporary assistance will be provided in those circumstances where a parent or carer is unable to take their child to and from a collection point for onward transport to school by a transport company. This is because the child's special educational need or disability has not changed and the transport service from the collection point is still available.

All collection points will be within a one-mile walking distance of the home and will be assessed in advanced for their suitability.

- Wherever a bus stop can be legally used as a collection point, it will be.
- Minibuses can stop to collect and drop off on yellow and double yellow lines; vehicles cannot stop on red routes, white zig zags (near a zebra crossing) or school keep-clear hatchings.
- The driver always plans not to cause obstructions to other road users while making a drop off or collection and will try to stop in parking areas or bays.
- Collections or drop-off are always made kerb side.
- Each collection point is physically assessed before being used in service; a driver will go out and test to see if the location is safe (for example, a well-lit public location, not too close to a junction or on the brow of a hill)
- The drivers complete dynamic risk assessments at the time of collections or /drop offs in the eventuality of any changes (new road layouts, another road user in the stopping space) and will slightly adjust the collection point if it is unsafe to stop.

## **11 Other arrangements when a child is not eligible**

### **11.1 Surrey Student Fare Card for reduced rate bus and/or rail travel**

The majority of students aged 16 – 19 will be expected to take advantage of the Surrey Student Fare Card which enabled travel at reduced rates on bus and train to school sixth forms and colleges.

Surrey Student Fare Cards are available to young people up to the end of the academic year which they reach their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday, who live in one of the administrative boroughs/districts of Surrey, are attending a full time education course on the date of the card's issue, and their journey starts and/or finishes in Surrey. Surrey Student Fare Cards are issued for one academic year.

Young people may purchase a Surrey Student Fare Card from the council at a cost of £25 per academic year. This entitles them to purchase single and return tickets at under 16 fares.

Student Fare Cards are issued by the Student Fare Card Team at Surrey County Council. You can apply online at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-transport](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-transport). More information is available on the Surrey County Council website, from the Surrey Schools and Childcare Service on 0300 200 1004, at schools, colleges and libraries.

A student fare card can only be used for travel to and from school or college. Your journey must start or finish in the [\*\*11 boroughs/districts of Surrey\*\*](#). If you need to change onto a bus route operating totally outside the county, you'll not be able to use your card for that part of the journey.

The following bus companies have agreed to charge the under-16 rate for any journey which starts or finishes in the 11 boroughs/districts of Surrey, including evenings, weekends, and school/college holidays.

- Arriva (service Surrey and West Sussex)
- Cobham Chatterbus
- Compass Bus
- Falcon Buses
- First
- Hallmark Connections: Students (16-19) travelling on Hallmark buses can redeem student/child fares with just their college/university student card.
- London General
- Metrobus
- Quality Line
- Safeguard
- Southdown
- Stagecoach
- White Bus Services

#### 11.2 National 16 – 17 Saver (Train)

In January 2019 the Department of Transport announced the launch of a new national Railcard scheme which will benefit 16-17 year olds. This Railcard offer 16-17 year olds a 50% discount on rail travel, and will be available from September this year. More information will be available over the summer months on the website <https://www.railcard.co.uk>

The Department for Transport has launched the new 16-17 Saver. The Saver offers 16-17 year olds:

- a 50% discount off standard anytime, off-peak, PlusBus, advance and season tickets.
- Can be used on South Western Railways, Southern and Great Western Railway network and across the National Rail network (except on ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper services)
- The cards cost £30 and are valid for one year or until your 18th birthday.

- a season ticket purchased before your 18th birthday can run up to 4 months after you turn 18. For example if you turn 18 in February then you can purchase a season ticket which will still give you 50% discount for travel up until June 2020

#### 11.3 Surrey 17-19 Train student fare card

If the National Train Card scheme does not meet your child's needs you may apply for a Surrey 17 – 19 Train student fare card.

The Surrey 17 - 19 Train Student Fare Cards are issued at the start of the academic year, and expire at the end of the summer term. They are available to young persons in Post 16 full time learning and education (e.g. attending school sixth form or college) aged 16-18 and those completing courses started prior to their 19th birthday.

Young people may purchase a Surrey 17 – 19 Train Student Fare Card for £25 which will enable them to obtain a discounted season ticket for train travel to and from educational establishments.

Surrey Student Fare Card and Surrey 17 – 19 Train Student Fare Card can be renewed each year, as long as the applicant remains eligible.

Student Fare Cards are issued by the Student Fare Card Team at Surrey County Council. You can apply online at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-transport](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-transport). More information is available on the Surrey County Council website, from the Surrey Schools and Childcare Service on 0300 200 1004, at schools, colleges and libraries.

Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan and or a disability/limited mobility may also qualify for reduced fares if they are eligible for the disabled person's bus pass ([www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/buses-and-other-transport/tickets-and-discounts/free-bus-passes-for-disabled-people](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/buses-and-other-transport/tickets-and-discounts/free-bus-passes-for-disabled-people)).

#### 11.4 Buy seats from other bus operators

Young people may also purchase seats on vehicles run by individual schools, colleges or by third party commercial operators on the school or college's behalf. For information on available routes please check individual school/college websites.

#### 11.5 Further Education Residential Support Scheme

Young people can apply for support if they need to attend a course that is not available within reasonable daily travelling distance and if similar courses are not available nearer the young person's home. Further information can be found at; [www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning)

#### 11.6 The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Learners may be able to access some funding towards transport costs directly from individual education and training providers, from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. Each learning provider has some discretionary funding that can be used for this purpose, subject to their own criteria. Resources are limited so learners should make an application to their school or college as early as possible in the academic year.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:

- in care
- care leavers
- in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
- in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right

Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2019 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2019 and have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2019 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or the local authority

Education and training providers are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information can be found at [www.gov.uk/](http://www.gov.uk/) search for post-16 bursaries.

#### 11.7 Young parents or Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're 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

#### Types of child care

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

## Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

- your childcare provider needs to confirm your child's attendance.
- your school or college needs to confirm that you're attending your course

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

## Attendance

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

## Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

## Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding.

This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at children's centres

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an under-19 bus only ticket or for those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19 to 25 card.

For more information please visit [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim)

## 11.8 Concessionary Seats

The Council provides transport for children who have a statutory entitlement to free home to school transport, where it is best value to use this mode of transport. If there are any spare seats available on these routes, they are available for purchase by pupils who do not meet the statutory entitlement criteria. Spare seats will be allocated on an annual basis; however, a seat may be withdrawn at any time at short notice if it is required by a pupil with a statutory entitlement to transport. Places are offered according to published criteria available on <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/transport/concessionary-seat>

## 12 Implementing the policy

This section sets out some of the operational standards that we will follow in delivering our statutory responsibilities for home to school transport. We want to make this transparent for all parents and carers in particular so that they understand how the service operates.

#### Provision of contracted transport vehicles (coaches, buses, minibuses and taxis)

When a child is entitled to home to school transport under the Council's policy, the Council will provide suitable transport and seek to ensure this is cost effective. The transport provided may take the form of a bus pass, train pass, seat on a contract vehicle, for instance a hired coach, a minibus or shared taxi. A travel allowance can also be provided for children with an EHCP where requested by parents or carers and where it is more cost effective.

#### Provision of transport for part-time hours

In accordance with statutory guidance, home to school transport will only be provided at the start and finish of the normal school or college day. The provision of transport for part-time hours does not fall within local authorities' statutory duties and will not be provided. Schools and parents and carers should take this into account when bespoke hours are being set for a child. Where families wish to have more flexible travel arrangements, a travel allowance can be requested.

However, where exceptional circumstances can be evidenced to show that a child with an EHCP is unable to partake in a full day's schooling, Surrey County Council may consider short term arrangements if a reintegration plan can be provided outlining the child's return to full time education.

#### Provision of transport for after school and non educational activities

In accordance with statutory guidance, home to school transport will only be provided at the start and finish of the normal school or college day. The provision of transport for non-statutory education or clubs does not fall within local authorities' statutory duties and will not be provided. Parents are expected to make travel arrangements for their children in these circumstances. Where families wish to have more flexible travel arrangements, a travel allowance can be requested.

#### Home address and house moves

In accordance with statutory guidance, home to school transport will only be provided from and to a single address at which the child or young person is habitually resident. Where a child splits their time equally between addresses, transport will be assessed from the address which is registered with the school as the home address or, prior to admission, the address used on the relevant school admission application form.

#### **For children without an EHCP**

Assistance with travel will not normally be agreed to a child's existing school if a house-move results in the prescribed distance being breached but there are other nearer schools with an available place

However, assistance may be agreed if the child is in years 6, 10 or 11 at the time of the move and if there are extenuating circumstances that the Council deem sufficient to provide assistance on a discretionary basis. Where parents wish their case to be considered on this basis, they should provide details along with independent evidence of their case.

Assistance with travel may also be agreed even if the school attended is not the nearest suitable with places. If the move is an enforced temporary council move within Surrey that is anticipated to last less than 6 months or where a parent has moved to a refuge in Surrey, and the distance from

home to school meets the agreed criteria, assistance with travel may be considered. Evidence of an enforced temporary council move/move to a refuge must be provided. Travel assistance agreed under this provision may only be agreed for a fixed period of time and will be subject to periodic review.

#### **For children with an EHCP**

If a child with an EHCP moves address, the SEND team will review the plan to consider if the school being attended is still the nearest suitable school that can meet the child's needs. If it is, and the child continues to meet the agreed eligibility criteria, then travel assistance will continue. If a suitable school is identified nearer to new home address then the SEND team may consult with the family over a change to the school named in the EHCP.

#### Pick up and drop off timing

Routes to and from school and pick-up and drop-off times are planned by the transport provider to be as efficient as possible for all students traveling on the vehicle. Because of this, it is not possible to accommodate the individual circumstances of each family, such as work commitments or taking other children to and from school. Where families wish to have more flexible travel arrangements, a travel allowance can be requested.

#### Journey Length

As a general guide, the Council will aim for the maximum journey time of 45 minutes for a child of primary school age, and 75 minutes for a child of secondary school age. It is recognised that this may not always be possible, particularly in rural areas. Journeys for children with special educational needs and disabilities travelling long distances to schools are likely to have longer journey times.

#### Dual and link placements, inclusion and pupil referral units

Dual placements are where a child or young person attends more than one school or where a school arranges a college link placement for a pupil. Dual placements may require additional transport assistance, such as transport at earlier or later times of during the school day. Schools are responsible for arranging and paying for the cost of such transport. Where a pupil is on the roll at one school but visits another school for inclusion or link purposes, the school where the pupil is usually based will be responsible for arranging and paying for transport. These arrangements also apply to pupil referral units.

#### Children attending residential placements

Children who attend a residential school that has been named in their EHCP will be entitled to travel assistance to take them to and from school as follows:

- **Weekly/Fortnightly boarding placements** – travel assistance will be provided to for children to travel to school on a Sunday evening/Monday morning, as directed by the school, and to travel home at the end of each week/fortnight, or earlier as directed by the school for unplanned or planned earlier closures.
- **Termly residential placements** – travel assistance will be provided for 12 single journeys to cover travel home at the start and end of each term and half term.
- **Permanent (52 week) residential placements** – travel assistance will be provided for 12 single journeys each academic year. These are at the discretion of the parent and school but,

where contracted transport is needed, this needs to be booked at least 10 days in advance through Surrey's Transport Coordination Centre  
Any additional trips will be the responsibility of the parent.

#### Passenger Assistants

Passenger assistants (escorts) are not automatically provided. In considering whether a route needs a passenger assistant, the Council generally takes account of the following:

- A child's medical needs, particularly where rescue medication is required.
- Where an individual child's needs create a clear danger or health and safety risk to themselves and other passengers on the vehicle.
- Where the number of children travelling together necessitates the provision of a passenger assistant to help manage a group children and their specific support needs on the journey.

Passenger assistants for SEND purposes are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Provision of a passenger assistants at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement; the requirement can be reassessed at any time in the academic year, and in the event of any change in circumstances.

#### Shared travel

Ordinarily children and young people travelling to and from school or college will be expected to share their transport with other children or young people. This promotes integration and independence, social skills as well as being more environmentally sustainable and cost effective. Conversely, travelling on their own may lead to social isolation of a young person and a delay in development of essential social behaviours and skills. It also impacts on an individual's ability to access other forms of travel and to travel with others.

Where arrangements are made for a child or young person to travel on their own, due to for instance medical reasons, this should not be seen as a permanent arrangement. The Council will review these arrangement on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain in the best interests of the child or young person.

#### Behaviour of children on transport

Children, parents, carers, schools, transport operators and the Council all have a role to play in ensuring the appropriate behaviour of children on school transport.

While passenger assistants have a responsibility for safeguarding children and maintaining behavioural standards on the vehicle during the course of the journey, schools will take whatever steps possible to ensure the appropriate behaviour of their students 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 while travelling.

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 needs assessment and will consider making alternative arrangements, for example, providing the parent or carer with a mileage allowance or direct payments to make their child's own travel arrangements.

The Council recognises 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. The Council will expect clear standards of acceptable behaviour in the interests of ensuring a safe journey for all pupils and staff as well as other road users.

Reasonable adjustments will be made in cases where behaviour problems persist and it is judged that the safety of the other passengers is endangered. Where reasonable adjustments cannot be made to deal with behaviour, transport can be withdrawn in individual cases and the Council will provide resources for parents to make alternative travel arrangements.

In consultation with schools, the Council may instigate permanent or fixed periods of exclusion from transport. Parents or carers will be responsible for transporting their children during any period of exclusion and ensuring their child's regular attendance at school.

#### Parental choice

Where a parent or carer has decided that they do not wish for their child to go to the school or college that the Council has decided can meet the student's needs and decides to seek a placement at an alternative setting further away, transport will not be provided. The implications of transporting their son/daughter to a setting other than the school that has been assessed as the nearest school that can meet a child's needs should be considered and alternative travel arrangements should be made.

#### Applying for transport

Parents and carers should be aware that it can take some time to arrange transport and are advised to apply as soon as they know that they require transport for their child, if they believe the child meets the eligibility criteria. Details of timescales, deadlines and arrangements can be found on [www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport).

A transport application form will need to be completed for children under the following circumstances, if the parent believes that their child might qualify for free transport under this policy:

- Surrey children who have an EHCP
- Surrey children who are due to start primary school in reception or transfer to year 3 from another school.
- Surrey children who are due to transfer to a University Technical College or Studio School at year 10.
- Parents who are entitled to free school meals or those whose families are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit and who believe they will qualify for free transport under the provisions in paragraphs 2.4, 2.5 and 3.1 of this policy. Evidence of free school meals or eligibility to the maximum level of Working tax Credit must be provided with the application form. Assistance on this basis will be reviewed annually.
- Parents who apply late for their child to transfer to year 7 at secondary school and whose application is processed after the national offer day.

The online application is available at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schooltransport). Alternatively, a hard copy can be requested from Surrey County Council on 0300 200 1004.

#### Travel assistance agreed in error

Transport that has been agreed in error or as a result of incorrect, misleading or fraudulent information will be withdrawn. Surrey County Council will seek reimbursement of any costs that have been obtained fraudulently and reserve the right to take legal action against any person who has made a fraudulent application for free home to school transport.

#### **How we use your data**

Surrey County Council respects your rights and is committed to ensuring that it manages your data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). You can find out more about how we manage your data on the privacy notice section of our website at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/your-privacy](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/your-privacy).

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