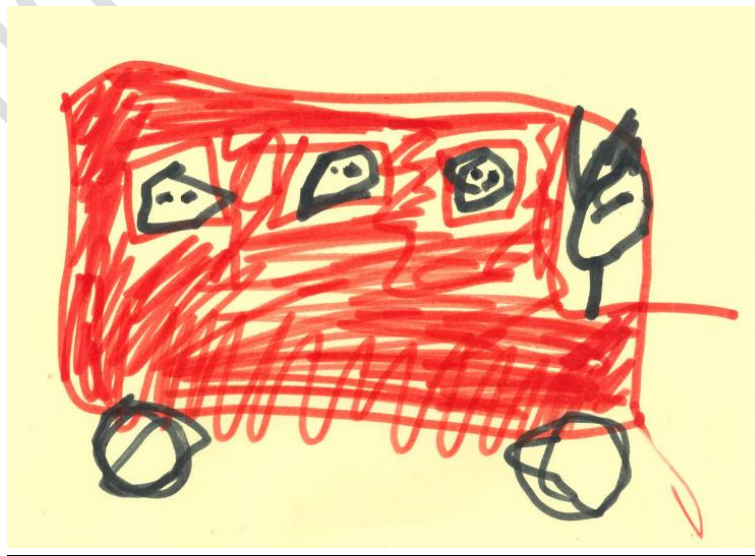


Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Home to School Travel Policy

2027-2028

The Home to School Travel Support Policy for learners with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND), and who are of compulsory school age (5-16 years old).



CONTENTS:

- [Terms We Use in this Document, and What They Mean](#)
- [Policy Statement](#)
- [Section 1 – Background and Scope of the Policy](#)
- [Section 2 - Legal Responsibilities and Eligibility](#)
- [Section 3 – Travel Assistance for Eligible Children.](#)
- [Section 4 – Reviews of Eligibility and Travel Support](#)
- [Section 5 - Application and Decision-Making Processes](#)
- [Section 6 – Complaints and Appeals](#)
- [Section 7 – Policy Review](#)
- [Appendix A – Code of Conduct for Parents and Children / Young People Receiving Travel Assistance](#)
- [Appendix B - Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Appendix C – Useful Links, Legislation and Guidance](#)
- [Appendix D – Eligibility Matrix](#)
- [Appendix E – Service Level Agreement Table](#)

To jump straight to the section you need, simply click the section name on the list above.

Policy Statement:

Travel principles and policy:

Swindon Borough Council is committed to working together with young people, families, schools and colleges to ensure that:

- Children and young people are safe and supported to access education.
- Young people and families have confidence in the travel offer.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Key mitigations include hardship support and promotion of Independent Travel Training.

Parents and carers have a duty to:

- Ensure their child(ren) receive an education via ensuring they attend school or college.
- Make the necessary travel arrangements for their child(ren) to attend regularly.
- Ensure their child attends the educational establishment identified for them.

Parents should note that late applications (received after 26th June) cannot guarantee that travel support will start at the beginning of September.

The council recognises that:

- The travel offer should respond to and be based on the needs of children and young people as they develop and progress and should promote and encourage their independence and social inclusion.
- Any travel assistance provided by the council is based on the needs of the child or young person and is provided to support young people and children to follow an appropriate educational course. The needs of the child and the travel provision will be periodically reviewed to ensure the child or young person is still accessing the most appropriate travel method.
- The council has a duty to support and enable young people to develop and achieve independence to enable them to prepare for adulthood.
- Encouraging young people's independence will develop their skills for better experience in adult life, their confidence and social skills, and increase their opportunities for continuing education, training and social inclusion.

The council also has a duty to:

- Manage public money responsibly.

- Provide value for money services.
- Promote the use of sustainable transport and travel.

If eligible for travel assistance, this will only be provided from the child's home to the school or college at which they are on roll at the beginning and end of the normal school day (as published on the school or college's website).

The council will not typically provide transport if:

- If the child attends another school or establishment that is arranged through their school as off-site provision, it will be the school / parent's responsibility to arrange travel to and from that school or establishment, for their off-site learning.
- The child's address will normally be the one that they spend the most school nights at, and any travel arrangements to or from an alternative address will be the responsibility of the parent to arrange.
- Parents regular work commitments or domestic arrangements will not normally be considered when deciding the eligibility of a child or young person or the type of assistance offered.
- Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child is prepared and ready to travel, at their pickup points at the right time, and that any behavioural concerns whilst travelling are positively managed. In very rare instances where there are serious safeguarding concerns travel will be denied.
- Travel assistance will not be provided for any medical appointments or domestic arrangements, or for the child to go to or from a different address other than their main residence. Travel assistance is not provided for breakfast or after school clubs or activities.

1: Background and Scope of the Policy:

1.1 The Law:

The Education Act 1996 (as amended by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) is the legal basis for the provision of home to school transport, and is set out in sections:

- 508A
- 508B
- 508C
- 508D
- 509AD
- Schedule 35B

Where appropriate, the Equality Act and English and European case law will also be applied to this area.

The Department for Education Issued its “*Post 16 transport and travel support to education and training*” guidance issued January 2019, outlining Local Authority’s responsibilities for learners over the age of 16.

Following this, in **January 2024**, the Department for Education (DfE) published updated statutory guidance to help local authorities ensure children of compulsory school age can access education without transport barriers (*Travel to School for Children of Compulsory School Age 2024*).

You can access the full guidance here: [Home-to-school travel - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/home-to-school-travel)

This policy therefore acts in line with the 2024 guidance as the most recent statutory instrument on the matter, replacing the 2014 guidance regarding the same cohort, alongside the above legislation.

Section 2: Eligibility:

Swindon Borough Council has a statutory duty to provide free suitable travel arrangements for eligible children under the age of 16. For those above the age of 16 there is no entitlement to free travel support to and from the named provider (see *The Post-16 Transport to Education and Training Guidance 2024* – Point 34).

The policy applies only to eligible children who are ordinarily resident in Swindon Borough Council. If parents pay council tax to a council other than Swindon Borough Council, they must apply to their own Local Authority for help with travel even if their child is attending a Swindon school / setting.

- For children / young people attending a residential setting (day or week), Travel assistance for boarders will only cover start and end of term and agreed temporary absence weekends. Daily transport for boarders is not provided.

This duty applies to eligible children of statutory school age, normally meaning age 5 to 16. Eligible children and young people are those who meet any one or more of the following criteria:

- **Category 1:** Statutory walking distance – a child / young person must live outside of this.
- **Category 2:** Unsafe Route to education – the route a child / young person would take to their education setting is not deemed safe.
- **Category 3:** SEND or mobility issues – a child / young person must have a special educational need or disability or mobility issues preventing a safe journey to education setting.
- **Category 4:** Extended rights – a child / young person is living in a low-income house, and therefore is afforded extended rights.

A flowchart / eligibility matrix can be found in [Appendix D](#) of this Policy.

All eligible children are entitled to travel assistance to / from school at the beginning and end of the normal school day. For children under the age of 16 this should be free of charge if they are eligible, however for young people above 16 years of age this is subject to individual Local Authorities policy as there is no statutory requirement to provide **free** travel assistance of any kind for children and young people over the age of 16.

2.1 Key Definitions:

In order to assess eligibility, it's important to understand what aspects of the criteria are referring to.

2.1.1 Statutory / Compulsory School Age:

Children are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they reach 16 years of age. Where travel assistance is assessed as eligible, this will be provided from the start of the reception year and subject to annual review or where there is a change in family circumstances e.g change of address.

2.1.2 Home Address:

The home address is where the child resides and spends the majority of his / her time. Occasionally a child will have more than one address; in this situation the address used for determining travel arrangements will be the one at which the child spends most of their time, including weekends and school holidays as well as during the week. When the child lives at the other address, they will not qualify for any travel arrangements other than the one provided from the primary address. The Local Authority will not provide travel to and from another address e.g child care providers.

2.1.3 Qualifying school:

The educational establishments covered by this policy are:

- Community, foundation or voluntary schools including special schools
- Non-maintained special schools
- Pupil referral units
- Academies, free schools and University Technical Colleges
- For children with Education Health and Care plans, independent schools and post-16 colleges if it is the only school named in the child's plan, or if it is the nearest of two or more schools named in the EHC Plan and is not named on the basis of parental preference

- Any other educational establishment, other than a school, where eligible children are receiving education by arrangement made under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1994

Where parents / carers apply for the nearest appropriate school and the school is unable to offer a place, free support with travel will be offered to the next nearest school with a place, providing the eligibility criteria are met and this will be reviewed at each Annual Review.

For children with an EHC plan, learners will only receive free transport to the nearest school that the Council agrees can meet their needs. If, by parental choice, a more distant school is attended, any transport shall remain the responsibility of the parent / carer. Whilst the child's EHC plan may name the parents' or carers' choice of school, this does not mean that the Council must provide travel assistance if, in the Council's view, the child's needs could be suitably met at a nearer school. This will be made clear in Section I of the EHC plan.

2.2 Category 1 - Statutory Walking Distance:

Statutory walking distance refers to the legal maximum number of miles is reasonably expected for a child / young person to walk to their education setting. This is outlined within the Department for Education's Guidance as:

- For children under 8 years of age, this is **2 miles**.
- For those of statutory school aged and are aged 8 and over (**8-16 years old**) this is **3 miles**.

Statutory walking distance is measured along the shortest route along which a child, accompanied by a responsible adult, may walk with reasonable safety. The route may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads. All such routes need to be open to the public. Even where the distance is calculated to have been longer than the statutory walking distance it will still be measured using this method.

If issues are raised over the possible safety of a walking route the School Transport Eligibility Team will arrange for an initial assessment and, if necessary, a full assessment by an officer from the Road Safety Team. **More information on what classes as an unsafe route can be found below (point 2.4.4).**

2.3 Category 3 – Unsafe Route to Education:

Eligibility for travel support can also be determined by if the route to a child / young person's education setting would be unsafe to travel either alone or with a responsible adult.

2.4.1 Unsafe routes:

No walking route can be absolutely safe. The term used in the Road Safety GB guidance to describe the accepted standard is "reasonable safety." This guidance notes that consideration on the following should be taken when determining if a route is safe:

- **Street Lighting:** However, no street lighting does not on its own make a route unsafe.
- **Road Accident Record:** The number of and type / nature / relevant of any incidents taking place on a route over a minimum period of 3 years.
- **Traffic Flow:** Where the two-way (one way of a dual carriageway) traffic flow is below 240 vehicles per hour the road is assessed as safe to cross – this is equivalent to 1 vehicle every 15 seconds, and allows a reasonable gap of time to cross a 7m wide road at a walking speed of 0.91 metres per second.

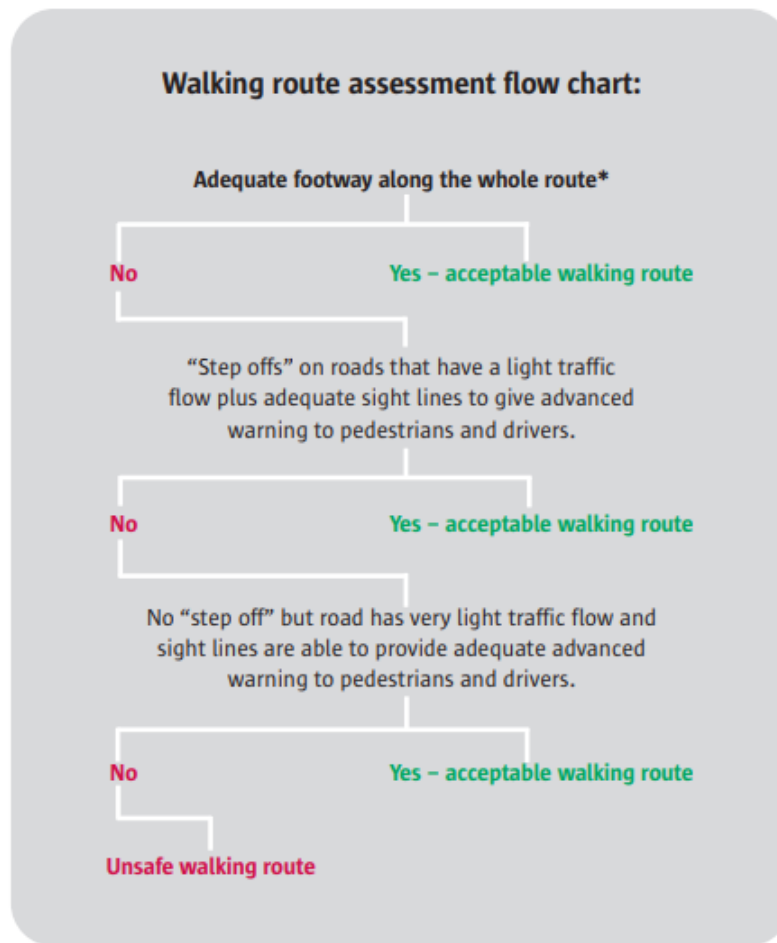
Swindon Borough Council assesses the safety of walking routes in accordance with the nationally recognised Road Safety GB “Assessment of Walked Routes to School” guidelines (latest version available at <https://roadsafetygb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/RSGB-WRTS-04.21.pdf>).

This methodology is used because:

- It provides a **consistent, evidence-based approach** for determining whether a route offers “reasonable safety” as required under the **Education Act 1996** and **DfE statutory guidance**.
- It ensures assessments consider objective factors such as traffic flow, gap counts, crossing facilities, visibility, and route characteristics, rather than subjective perceptions.
- It aligns with **case law and national standards**, reducing the risk of successful challenge through appeals, Ombudsman, or judicial review.
- It supports **transparency and fairness**, as parents can be assured that decisions are based on a recognised national standard.

Assessments will normally be carried out during peak school travel times and will assume, as required by law, that a child is accompanied by a responsible adult where necessary. Where a route is deemed unsafe, distance will be recalculated using the shortest available **safe walking route**.

The guidance provides the below flow chart to help determine if a route is safe:



This guidance can be accessed in full through the following link:
<https://roadsafetygb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/RSGB-WRTS-04.21.pdf>

Assessments will usually take place in the morning during the times children will be travelling to school and assessments may also be undertaken when returning home in the afternoon. Visits will be timed, where possible, so that crossing assessments of main roads take place at the times when the number of children travelling to school is highest.

2.4.2 Road Safety:

- a) Swindon Borough Council expects that, where necessary, a child will be accompanied to school by a responsible person, such as a parent or other adult. This is a well-established legal point regarding the responsibilities of a parent and means that any assessment of route safety assumes that a child will be accompanied, as necessary, by a parent or other adult.
- b) It is also well-established in law that the shortest publicly accessible route may include:
 - footpaths
 - shared footpath/cycle tracks

- bridleways and other pathways
- recognised roads
- paths along trunk roads
- footpaths along which there is a permissive right of way

It is important to note that there is **no requirement for a route to be maintained by Swindon Borough Council** or by another public body. It simply needs to be available for public use.

If a parent is concerned that a child needs to be accompanied for safety reasons, but the route has been judged by Swindon Borough Council to be appropriate, it is the responsibility of that parent to ensure that the child is accompanied on the route to and from school. Parental perception of risk is not sufficient cause for the provision of free or subsidised travel.

- c) Route Assessments are carried out by an officer from Swindon Borough Council's Highways Team in accordance with the *"Travel to School for Children of Compulsory School Age"* statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education in 2023 and the Road Safety manual *"Assessment of Walked Routes to School"* issued by Road Safety GB.
- d) In accordance with the law, all routes are assessed with the assumption that pupils are accompanied as necessary by a responsible person (see paragraphs 2.3 and 4.1 above). Routes are not classed as unavailable solely due to any or all of the following factors:
 - lonely routes
 - routes that pass close to canals, rivers, ditches, lakes, or ponds
 - routes that require railway crossings if a suitable authorised crossing is present
 - the absence of street lighting

2.4 Category 2 – SEND or Mobility Issues:

Home to School Travel Support may be granted due to SEND or Mobility issues on either of the following 2 Grounds:

2.4.1 Ground 1:

Children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs or disability (SEND)

- a) Children who cannot walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs or disability (SEND), will not automatically be refused free travel on the

basis that they live within the statutory walking distance of the school attended, if that school is the nearest that they could attend.

- b) A parent who believes their child is unable to walk to the nearest school that they could attend because of mobility problems or associated health and safety issues will be expected to provide supporting evidence from a GP or consultant. In the case of a child with an EHCP, the Plan may provide all the information required.
- c) Free transport will not be agreed to *any* school irrespective of distance, journey time or number of other suitable schools that are closer to the family home. Free travel will only be provided to the nearest suitable school.
- d) The Supported Transport Service may need to assess the mobility problems, or associated health and safety issues, related to a student's SEND to determine the type of free travel that can be made available to that student.

2.4.1 Ground 2:

Children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

- a) The **Children and Families Act** received the Royal Assent in March 2014, and this resulted in the gradual replacement of Statements of Special Educational Need with EHCPs.
- b) Having an EHCP **does not** give automatic eligibility for free or subsidised travel. Therefore, if a school has been named in a Plan in accordance with parental preference, and there is a nearer suitable and available school, and there is no other basis in the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy for agreeing free travel, transport to the named school will be the responsibility of that child's parent, not the council.
- c) Some children with EHCPs may have specific needs that require the use of specialist transport that is not widely available. If a specialist vehicle is not required, it may still be necessary to use more expensive transport provision, such as taxi transport, to meet the specific needs of the children concerned. However, in all cases, the council will provide the most cost-effective means of travel that will meet a child's need.
- d) A parent of a child with an EHCP may, in certain circumstances, be given the option of a personal budget to meet some or all of the provision detailed in the Plan and special transport will be an element of the personal budget.
- e) Whether there is a requirement to assist in meeting a child's travel needs will be considered when an EHCP is issued or amended. Liaison will take place between School Transport Eligibility and SEND Services to ensure the needs of the child are fully understood, as they relate to travel arrangements.

For children with medical needs that do not have an EHCP, families will need to apply through the mainstream travel policy – which can be found through the following link:

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/10994/mainstream_home_to_school_transpo

2.5 Category 4 – Extended Rights for Low Income Families:

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, provides extended rights for students from low income groups.

Low income groups are identified as where the student is entitled to **free school meals or where the parents receive the maximum Working Tax Credit**. Entitled groups are as follows:

- a. Students aged between 8 and 11 years old – where the nearest school is beyond two miles
- b. Students aged between 11 and 16 who:
 - Attend one of the three closest Secondary Schools to their home address where their home to school distance is between two and six miles or
 - Attend the nearest suitable school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, where they live more than two miles, but no more than 15 miles from the school

The LA may review all eligibility for travel assistance on a yearly basis. If the student is no longer eligible to travel assistance on these grounds, then the travel assistance will be withdrawn.

2.6 Discretionary Arrangements, Exclusions and Errors:

Swindon Borough Council reserve the right to apply the below discretionary arrangements and exclusions to this policy.

2.6.1 Discretionary arrangements:

The Council reserves the right to charge towards the costs of any travel assistance provided under discretionary arrangements.

Free and subsidised transport **is not provided to children of pre-school age** who attend a nursery or other Early Years settings, irrespective of whether they have an EHCP. Travel to nursery or early years settings is the responsibility of a child's parent. This is the case both for children who have an EHCP and those who do not have a such a plan.

There is no legal right of appeal should a parent believe the policy regarding free travel to a nursery or early years settings should be set aside in the case of their child or any other child.

2.6.2 Exclusions:

The Council will not normally provide travel assistance through this policy in the following circumstances:

- So that parents can take siblings to different schools or go to work at a specific time.

- To attend extra-curricular activities.
- To attend doctors, dental or any other appointments.
- To attend breakfast or after school clubs / activities.
- Students excluded during the school day (week / term for boarding placements).
- Students to attend work experience placements, taster or open days.
- Students that are unwell and have to be collected from school during the school day, including students in residential settings who are unable to use the scheduled travel support.
- To or from part-time provision off the school site organised by the school e.g. to vocational classes at a college including movement between educational establishments / sites.
 - This includes split-site provision.
 - Travel assistance will **not** be provided for movement between split sites unless explicitly agreed as part of reasonable adjustments.
- To or from a place of temporary residence including respite.
- To or from childminders, friends or other family members addresses.
- At a differing time, due to detention.
- To or from residential school trips – this is the responsibility of the school to arrange.

2.6.3 Offer of free transport made in error:

If free transport is offered in error, because of a mistake **made by Swindon Borough Council**, the free travel will be withdrawn after a notice period of not less than 6 weeks.

If free transport is offered in error because of false or inaccurate information provided by the parent, the transport may be withdrawn immediately.

2.7 Eligibility Based on Age:

A child / young person's eligibility for Home to School Transport will be different depending on their age at the point of the application.

2.7.1 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Aged Students:

Home to School Travel Support is **not** available for children attending early years settings.

2.7.2 Primary School Aged Students:

Travel assistance can be provided (on road safety grounds) if the journey to the designated appropriate school would involve the use of roads without footpaths or lighting.

2.7.3 Secondary School Aged Students:

There are a number of criteria that need to be met for Secondary School students to receive travel assistance on road safety grounds. The following criteria are based on the expectation that parents will accompany their children to and from school where they consider it necessary:

- a. There is no footway or;
- b. Students have to walk along a dual carriageway with a speed limit of 40mph or higher, and they have to cross a dual carriageway and there is no safe crossing point available. A safe crossing point is defined as one of the following:
 - Light operated crossings
 - Zebra crossings
 - Pedestrian refuge
 - Foot Bridge
 - Underpass
 - School crossing patrol in operation

2.7.4 Post-16 Aged Students:

As outlined in Section 208F of the Education Act 1996, Local Authorities have a legal duty to provide free travel support which it considers necessary for eligible adult learners aged 19-25, and who have an Education, Health and Care Plan to attend qualifying establishments. It should be noted here that:

- Swindon Borough Council does not provide Travel Support to training providers.

Swindon Borough Council currently operate a Post-16 Home to School Travel Support Statement, outlining the legal duties and local policy for this group of learners. This document can be found on the Local Offer alongside this policy, through the below link:

[SEND transport policy | Swindon Borough Council](#)

A consultation is currently being run regarding a charging model for Home to School Travel for learners aged 16-18 years old, in order to bring Swindon in-line with other Local Authorities. Should the outcome of this consultation result in a charging model being adopted, information will be published within the Post-16 Travel Support Statement ahead of the academic year.

For more information on the consultation, please visit the above link.

Section 3: Travel Assistance for Eligible Children:

1.1 Sustainability arrangements:

Travel assistance will be appropriate to the individual needs and circumstances of the child and will encourage them to grow in confidence and independence wherever possible.

The Council will encourage, and promote, sustainable travel options and will aim to improve the physical well-being of those who use them and/or the environment. To this end, priority will be given to walking, cycling, public transport, and shared transport.

The Council also has the responsibility to ensure the best use of resources on behalf of all residents of Swindon and will decide upon the most cost effective and appropriate form of travel assistance for each individual.

Travel arrangements will allow the child to reach school without undue stress, strain or difficulty. Best practice suggests maximum journey time should be:

- **45 minutes** for primary school age children.
- **75 minutes** for secondary school age children.

There may be situations where a journey time of more than 75 minutes is required. For example, this may occur in travel arrangements for pupils attending out of borough residential settings.

3.2 How decisions are made:

For all children and young people with SEND, a travel eligibility assessment will be undertaken by the Home to School travel team at the point of application. Decisions regarding transport eligibility are governed by the local authority's transport policy.

The information used for the assessment is gathered from various sources including:

- School reports
- Parents
- The child / young person themselves
- Medical reports – including CaMHS and BeU Swindon
- Social Care
- EHCPs

The travel assistance eligibility assessment or review will consider the individual needs of the child or young person in the **following** 6 key areas:

- Mobility
- Medical needs
- Behavioural needs
- Vulnerability
- Practicality
- Independence and Independent Travel Training (ITT) suitability

Decisions are reviewed yearly or when circumstances change, e.g. a change of educational establishment, change of home address.

When the assessment is completed, the Home to School travel team will decide whether or not a child or young person is eligible as a result of their SEN and disability to travel assistance, the type of travel assistance to be offered, and whether or not it is appropriate to offer Independent Travel Training (ITT). Decisions will be made and communicated to families within 15 working days of the application being received, this will be in written form to ensure evidence of decision making.

Parents should note that **late applications (received after 26th June) cannot guarantee that travel support will start at the beginning of September.** The Local Authority encourage families to submit their applications as soon as the window opens, to ensure the Local Authority have sufficient time to consider applications and make arrangements.

3.3 Travel assistance offer:

Once the eligibility for travel assistance is established by the Home to School travel team, the Council will consider on a case by case basis the right type of travel assistance.

In line with the Council's commitment to promote independence, the SEND Service and the Council's Travel Team will work jointly with parents / carers to ensure that:

- Children are able to travel in the most ordinary way as possible – with people they know best, family and friends, developing social interactions, resilience and social commutation skills
- The emphasis is always on supporting and advising families to support their own children. Support should be the most inclusive and least specialist form of travel to ensure that travel support child's wider outcomes

3.3.1 Personal Travel Budgets (PTB):

The Council is committed to families having choice and control over the best way their children are supported. Parents / carers are best placed to support travel arrangements of their own children.

A Personal Travel Budget is a sum of money provided to parents or carers of children with SEND who are eligible for travel assistance. Personal Travel Budgets enable families to arrange home to school travel directly by using mileage allowance.

- ~~Mileage allowance is calculated at 45 pence per mile in line with HMRC rates.~~
- Mileage allowance will be paid at a rate that mirrors the HMRC guidance on travel expense rates at the time.

Families can work together to achieve the best possible travel arrangements, and this option of support can only be used with parental consent.

Ways in which the Personal Travel Budgets can be used include:

- Purchasing a travel pass for a parent, or a trusted adult, to accompany the child on public transport
- Paying for a passenger assistant for the child to walk to school or to travel by public transport. Parents or carers may also choose to do this themselves
- Covering the cost of parents driving or cycling with their child to school
- Arranging shared travel arrangements with other parents, such as shared driving responsibilities, walking buses or joint taxi bookings
- Overcoming barriers that may prevent parents accompanying their child to school, e.g. travel / childcare arrangements for siblings

Personal Travel Budgets are voluntary. Parent / carers can stop them if their circumstances change as long as six weeks' notice is given in order that an alternative form of travel assistance can be determined if eligibility remains. They do not have any impact on any other benefits.

Parents will be required to sign an agreement with the Local Authority and provide bank details in order that monthly payments can be made. PTBs are required to be renewed on an annual basis as circumstances can, and do, change and it is important that this is considered annually.

It is all parent's responsibility to reapply each year, PTBs will not be automatically renewed.

Parents receiving the higher rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance and who are therefore entitled to a car for their child's use under the Motability Scheme will be considered under the same eligibility criteria and will normally be offered travel assistance via a Personal Travel Budget for reimbursement in the first instance.

For more information on Personal Travel Budget's go to <https://localoffer.swindon.gov.uk>

3.3.2 Minibus and taxi arrangements:

If it is deemed necessary to provide such travel support, parents will be responsible for ensuring that children get to any designated pick-up point for the vehicle and remain responsible for them until they board the vehicle on their way to school and / or once they leave the vehicle at the end of their return journey.

Once on school premises, the school becomes responsible for the supervision of the child / young person.

Some children may be picked up from home and parents are responsible for ensuring that they or a nominated adult are present when their child/children are collected or dropped off from home.

3.3.3 Provision of Passenger Assistants:

Passenger Assistants are responsible for the care and supervision of the children / young people to and from school. They will oversee the child or young person's conduct and safety in such a way that the driver is unhindered in his / her duties.

A passenger assistant will only be provided following the outcome of an assessment of the child's Special Educational Needs and / or medical needs in order to meet the needs of the students travelling to and from school. The assessment will include the completion of a risk assessment to inform decision making.

The assessment may be different in a school or home setting. This determination will be made by the SEND Service in liaison with the Council's Travel Team considering:

- A student's medical needs, particularly where rescue medication or emergency intervention is required. In this instance the student's individual health care plan should be provided clearly stating:
 - the frequency of any medical intervention required
 - the level of risk associated with not receiving the intervention
 - the level of risk associated with giving the intervention
 - what level of training/competency is required from the assistant (e.g. can the task be delegated)
- Where an individual student's needs create a clear danger or health and safety risk to themselves and other passengers on the vehicle

The consideration for a passenger assistant will be based on evidence received from all relevant parties including parents, medical professionals and educational settings. Provision of a Passenger Assistant will be reviewed regularly.

Passenger Assistants will only deliver medical interventions that they have been trained for, and deemed competent to, carry out by a registered health care professional. This training will be determined through the assessment of the provision of a Passenger Assistant under the category of meeting medical needs and based on the evidence provided.

3.3.4 Independent Travel Training (ITT):

Swindon Borough Council believes that children and young people with SEND should be equipped with skills to enable them to live long, happy and fulfilling adult lives. As part of our commitment to prepare our children and young people to live independent lives, **we operate an Independent Travel Training (ITT) Scheme.**

Wherever feasible (as the Local Authority recognises that not all children / young people are candidates for independent travel), the Local Authority will encourage young people and their families to undergo Independent Travel Training, not only to support their travel to their education setting, but to equip them with the skills needed for independent travel beyond education.

There are many benefits for young people completing Independent Travel Training (ITT), including:

- Increased confidence and independence
- Decreased reliance on specialist transport and parents / carers
- Improved contribution at school
- More opportunities to go out with friends and join clubs
- More opportunities to go to college or find a job
- Improved emotional health & well-being

The Independent Travel Training Offer includes a range of options to help young people travel independently and confidently, including:

- Walking
- Cycling
- Bus
- Train
- A combination of a different options

Independent Travel Training is a free service available to young people within the borough, and will serve as the first offer for travel assistance where it is determined that a young person would be a suitable candidate for such. Families are expected to engage with the programme unless there is clear evidence to support it not be appropriate to do so, and bespoke transport will be not considered without Independent Travel Training being considered first.

You can find out more about Independent Travel Training, including what we offer and eligibility criteria, on the Swindon Local Offer (link below):

<https://localoffer.swindon.gov.uk/itt>

Section 4: Reviews of Eligibility and Travel Support:

Each year, a child or young person's needs for travel assistance will be reviewed by the Home to School travel team, and assistance may be amended or withdrawn if it is no longer required or a child or young person is no longer eligible.

4.1 EHCP Annual Reviews:

EHCP Annual reviews should **take place annually**, and should always discuss travel arrangements, in particular:

- At the end of Year 3 in which the child or young person attains the age of 8 years
- At the end of Year 6 in preparation for transfer to secondary education
- Y9 review for possible requirements for extended curriculum studies
- During Year 11 for those young people transferring to Post 16 in a maintained school
- Following the successful completion of Independent Travel Training
- Change of address or family circumstances

Schools will then forward any relevant details to the Council together with the EHCP Annual Review paperwork so that a decision to continue, amend or withdraw travel support can be made.

In addition to the review points described above, the Council has discretion to review travel arrangements for a child or young person whenever necessary. The Council may request up-to-date information from parents and / or schools in order to establish whether travel needs have changed. When travel arrangements are reviewed, consideration will be given to strategies for supporting a child or young person with independent travel.

4.2 Moving Home and other Permanent Changes:

Changes to the permanent home address are very likely to affect a child / young person's entitlement to travel assistance and, in these circumstances, the eligibility will need to be reassessed again in accordance with the Council's policy.

Parents must inform the SEND Service and the Council's Travel Team of the change as soon as possible. Travel arrangements can take up to **14 working days** to amend, and so notice is required.

The eligibility for travel assistance will be reassessed against the new address or the Council will also investigate whether there are any appropriate schools nearer to the new family home. Where appropriate schools exist nearer to the new family home and the child or young person has an EHC Plan, then the Council may consider amending the EHC Plan to name a closer school.

If the child's school is not deemed as the nearest appropriate school to the new home, the child may not be eligible to receive travel assistance.

It will be parents' responsibility to make their own arrangements to transport their child or young person to and from school until any new travel assistance is in place and confirmed within the first **14 working days** from the date of notification.

4.3. Withdrawal of Travel Assistance on Health and Safety Grounds:

The Council has a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all children and young people for whom travel assistance is provided. We also have an obligation to ensure the health and safety of drivers and passenger assistants. If a child or young person behaves in a manner that places the health and safety of those on board a vehicle at serious risk, or presents a serious risk to themselves, this may result in travel assistance being withdrawn with immediate effect.

The parent will be informed of any incident that has occurred involving their child and they will be given an opportunity to make representations to the Council or appeal against the Council decision to withdraw travel assistance for their child. Details of how to appeal are in Section 6 of this policy.

The Council will work together with parents/carers and the educational setting to find an alternative way for the child to get to school safely but, during this process, the parent of the child or young person will be responsible for making suitable arrangements to get the child or young person to school.

There is a Code of Conduct to help young people understand what is expected of them when travelling. Please see Appendix A for detail.

Section 5: Application and Decision-Making Processes:

5.1 Application for support with travel:

Parents who believe that their child may be eligible for assistance should make an online application available at <https://swindon-cxm.uat.jadu.net/xfp/form/1558>

The completion of an application form does not automatically guarantee the entitlement for travel assistance.

If the child is transferring to Primary or Secondary school for the first time, the applications must be received **no later than 30th April**. Where applications for phase transfer to Primary and Secondary provision are received after the closing date, whilst every effort will be made to put travel assistance in place for the first day of term, this cannot be guaranteed.

Parents should attach any documentation that they feel may be beneficial to for the Council to consider. All existing information already held by the Council will also be used to determine eligibility, for example an EHC Plan.

If the child uses a wheelchair or buggy, or needs to carry equipment, such as oxygen, medication, walking aids, etc. the Council will need to know the details (including make and model of any wheelchair or buggy) to help assess the most appropriate form of travel assistance.

If a child or young person requires a booster seat in order to travel safely and comfortably, this must be provided by the parent - the Council's Travel team must also be made aware of this.

5.2 Decision making process - Eligibility:

The eligibility decision is made by the Home to School Travel team. All cases will be considered individually.

All existing and new information submitted at the time of the application will be taken into account.

Parents / carers will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing within **15 working days** of receipt of the application. Should the application be refused you will be informed of the reasons for this along with what your options are.

If support with travel to school is agreed parents/carers and children/young people will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct (see Appendix A).

5.2.3 Decision making process - Type of travel support:

The **decision regarding the** type of travel support **provided** is made by the **Swindon Borough Council** Home to School Travel team.

The views of the **child**, young person and **their** parents will be considered, but the final decision on the type of travel assistance offered will be made by the Home to School Travel team.

They will determine the mode of travel assistance that delivers the best value for money for Councils tax payers, considering any special arrangements needed to support the child's assessed SEND, mobility or medical needs.

Where this is different to the views of the parents or the young person, an explanation for the choice will be given. Parents may be asked to support their child with home to school travel, for example a Personal Travel Budget or accompaniment on public transport, however this can only be implemented with parental consent.

Section 6: Complaints and Appeals:

6.1 Complaints:

Usually complaints arise when you are unhappy about something. You are entitled to make a formal complaint regarding Swindon Borough Council if:

- You feel that your case has not been dealt with properly and following the relevant legislation / guidance / policies.
- That the information given to you was incorrect.
- There has been an unacceptable delay in you receiving a service.
- The conduct of a Swindon Borough Council employee is not what we would expect.

For these sorts of issues, please follow the complaints procedure which can be found on Swindon Borough Council's website through the link below, or requested by calling 01793 463000.

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contact_us/463/complaints_compliments_and_feedback

The Local Authority are unable to accept complaints about the following, as concerns around decisions should be raised through the appeals processed (outlined below in point 7.2).

- The decision that your child / young person is **not** eligible for travel support.
- The mode of travel support offered.
- The total provided as part of a Personal Travel Budget.

6.2 Appeals:

With an appeal, you may be perfectly happy with the way that you have been treated but feel that the wrong decision has been made and would like it re-examined. For these issues, please follow the Appeals policy set out below.

This appeals policy is applicable to children who live within the Borough of Swindon that are attending mainstream and special schools. This appeals policy applies to children with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

6.2.1 Right to Appeal:

Where a parent has been refused transport assistance they can challenge the decision for the following reasons:

- Their child's eligibility
- The distance measured in relation to statutory walking distances; and The safety of the route

Where a parent is not happy with the type of travel assistance offered they can challenge the decision through the appeals process.

- For example, you may have been offered a bus pass, but feel that a seat on a mini-bus would be more appropriate.

6.2.2 Stage 1:

Within **20 working days** from the receipt of the local authority's home to school travel decision, a parent can make a request asking for a review of the decision. A parent will be advised of the right for a review within the decision letter.

The request for review should be made by completing the travel appeal form online. A link will be provided by email. The parent should state the reason why the decision should be reviewed and given details of any personal and / or family circumstances the parent believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

Within **20 working days** of the receipt of the parent's written request a senior officer will review the original decision and will notify the parent by way of detailed written notification of the outcome of the review.

The decision letter will contain the following

- The nature of the decision reached;
- How the review was conducted (including any standards followed e.g., Road Safety GB)
- Information regarding other parties consulted
- What factors were considered
- Information how the parent can escalate their case to stage 2 if appropriate

6.2.3 Stage 2:

Following the receipt of the local authority's stage one decision notification, a parent can within **20 working days** submit a request to escalate the matter to Stage 2.

A parent should complete a travel appeal form online. A link will be provided by email.

Within **40 days** of receipt an appeal will be scheduled with an independent panel of officers who have had no prior involvement in the case and hold no budget responsibility for the service. The panel will consider both written and verbal representation from both parents and officers involved in the case.

The parent will be notified of the outcome by telephone **and written notification** following the outcome of the appeal panel and will receive formal notification of the outcome within **5 working days**. The notification will include

- The nature of the decision reached;
- How the review was conducted (including any standards followed e.g., Road Safety GB)
- Information regarding other parties consulted
- What factors were considered
- If refused, information about how the parent can refer to the case to the Local Authority.

The appeals committee can only decide in favour of the appellant for a period of one year, **as all families are required to re-apply for travel support on a yearly basis.**

6.2.4 Local Government Ombudsman:

The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) can investigate complaints about councils, all adult social care providers and some other public service organisations. They are a free service, are independent, and can decide if they will investigate your complaint or not.

Whilst the Ombudsman cannot question the council's decision, it can consider your complaint for the following reasons:

- If you think you were refused help unfairly.
- Because of a mistake
- Because your request for help was not handled correctly.

It should be noted that the Ombudsman cannot deal with complaints about travel to an independent / private school, unless it is named in your child or young person's EHC Plan.

Before submitting a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, you must complete the council's Home to School Travel and Travel Review / Appeal process first (of which is outlined above). You **must** complete all review stages before making your complaint, as the Ombudsman will not consider your case until you do. If you are unhappy with the outcome, or the process is taking too long, you can then proceed to complain to the Ombudsman.

For Home to School Travel specific information from the Local Government Ombudsman, the following link can be used to access further information to alternatively you can call: **0300 061 0164**

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/education/school-transport>

Where an appeal is upheld, this does not guarantee funding throughout the school life of the child, and the circumstances under which the appeal was upheld would be kept under review.

6.2.5 Education Transport Appeals Sub-Committee:

An Independent appeals panel will meet to consider travel appeals. The membership of this panel is made up of three Council Officials selected from a pool appointed by the Appeals Committee. These officers will not have been involved with the case previously and should not have any close connection with the appellant. If one of the officers does have a remote connection with the appellant, they may be allowed to take part in the hearing if neither the LA's representative nor the appellant objects

The Education Travel Appeals Sub-Committee will consider case papers for each appeal consisting of the reasons as to why the LA have refused to provide travel assistance, any other relevant information and the parents appeal giving reasons as to why they are appealing against this decision.

Each officer will remain a Committee member for at least one year but there will be no limit on how long they wish to continue as a member providing there is no conflict of interest in the areas mentioned above.

All officers on the Appeals Committee will undertake training on the Travel Policy at least once per academic year to ensure that Councillors become 'expert' in this field.

The Education Travel Appeals Sub-Committee **must**:

- Consider all appeals on their individual merits. The decision of the Sub-Committee is final with no further rights of appeal.
- Operate within the Travel Policy at all times.

- Take into consideration the cost of Travel should the appeal be upheld.
- If the Education Travel Appeals Sub-Committee agrees to uphold an appeal, it must indicate the length of time for which the travel has been agreed.

Once the appeal has been heard the Education Travel Appeals Sub-Committee will make its decision that day and the Committee Officer will endeavour to contact the parent by telephone the same day to give the result of the appeal. A decision letter outlining the Education Travel Appeals Sub-Committee decision and its reasons will follow usually within one week.

If parents are not happy with the decision of the Education Travel Appeals Sub-Committee then they are able to contact the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will only be able to look at the way the appeal was conducted and establish whether the LA followed all its processes in the correct manner. **They are not able to over-turn the decision.**

If the Appeal is in relation to a placement made by order of an SEN & Disability Tribunal, the Appellant and the Local Authority may be bound by any decision relating to travel that the Tribunal has made. The SEN and Disability Tribunal may have specifically come to a decision about placement based on the inclusion of travel costs.

For appeals on the grounds of road safety, parents can only appeal if they believe that they are unable to accompany their child to school. However, the Appeals Sub-Committee will not usually accept the need for parents to be at work as the reason why travel should be provided.

The Education Travel Sub-Committee is able to consider applications for assistance from parents of children receiving nursery education as per the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The grounds under which the Education Travel Appeals Sub-Committee can allow / uphold an appeal are:

- The Travel Policy has not been applied properly
- There are discrepancies in the way the application has been handled
- The individual circumstances put forward by the applicant outweigh the normal policy considerations and are considered to be exceptional circumstances.

Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

- If there are exceptional circumstances within the immediate family unit where the child lives that affects the child ability to attend their designated school such as domestic violence. Evidence would be required to support this
- Death or serious illness of parent with whom the child has been living
- In cases of students with Special Educational Needs – additional evidence of need that the Education Travel Appeals Sub-Committee is asked to consider

Section 7: Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or in line with changing government legislation, requirements or statutory guidance.

The Policy incorporates the Annual Policy Statement in respect of Guidance for Young people in Post 16 Education and Training.

As part of our commitment to ensuring information published is accessible to the widest possible audience, including those with disabilities, if you require this document in a different format please contact us on 01793 445500.

Impact will be monitored annually through complaints, appeals data, and consultation feedback.

Glossary of Terms:

Parents: The term “parents” should be read to include foster parents, carers and other guardians of children and young people.

The Council / Local Authority: Swindon Borough Council.

SEND: Special Educational Needs / Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Special School: A school is a special school if it is specifically organised to make special educational provision for pupils with SEND.

Mainstream School: Means a maintained school or an academy that is not a special school.

EHC Plan / EHCP: Education, Health and Care Plan.

SEND Service: The Council team which assess and manage the reviewing processes for children and young people who may have a Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND).

Travel Team: The Council team which commissions, allocates and manages the home to school travel arrangements on behalf of the Council.

SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SIAS): Provides confidential, impartial, free advice and support to parents and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Swindon SEND Families Voice (SSFV): Swindon SEND Families Voice are a non-profit making Community Interest Company formed by parent and carers in January 2018. They are a group of parents that have children with additional needs. They are the recognised forum by the Department for Education and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF).

Under Consultation

Appendix A: Code of Conduct for Parents and Children / Young People Receiving Travel Assistance

Parents' responsibilities:

At all times parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure that the school and the local authority have your up-to-date contact details, including mobile phone number, and any emergency contact details.
- Make sure that your child is ready five minutes before a pick-up whether at home or from a pick up point. Please be aware that if your child is late for the pick-up and the driver has already left, it will be your responsibility to get the child to school.
- Always be at home or the drop-off point to meet your child or make arrangements for your alternative emergency contact to meet your child on your behalf.
- Ensure that your child is aware of appropriate behaviour whilst travelling to and from school.
- Make your own travel arrangements should your child:
 - Finish school before the normal departure time
 - Be taken ill at school and require to return home early
 - Be unable to travel at the normal time, for example due to detention or exclusion
 - Attend breakfast clubs or after school clubs
 - Be on work experience
- Make your own travel arrangements if a visiting relative or foreign student stays with the family and attends school with your child.
- Ensure sufficient notice is provided to the relevant council team to reassess your child's eligibility to receive travel assistance if the family move home or child changes schools (at least **14 working days**).
- If advised that your child will be travelling by taxi, when informed which company will be collecting / dropping off your child, contact the operator to confirm the necessary arrangements.
- Provide suitable child seats or other safety equipment for the age and abilities of their child. It is recommended that you speak to your taxi or minibus operator before purchasing this equipment, to confirm what equipment will be required. (Operators will provide standard seat belts and suitable restraints for wheelchairs and wheelchair users.)

- Notify the Council's Travel Team if your child is going to be absent from school for more than one school day.

Please note - If the Parent or Guardian is not at home or the drop-off point the driver may take the child back to school or to another appropriate place of safety as agreed with the Social Care team.

In these circumstances, the Council reserves the right to pass on any additional costs incurred to the parents. All incidents will be recorded and considered by the relevant travel teams. In the event of frequent repeated incidents, travel assistance may be suspended or withdrawn, pending re-assessment. Information may also be shared with social care for safeguarding reasons.

Code of conduct for a child or young person when travelling:

There is a responsibility on all children and young people to behave appropriately whilst travelling.

It is the responsibility of children and young people to:

- Arrive for their transport in good time and with a valid travel pass for travel if one is issued
- Behave in a safe and responsible way at all times
- Get on the correct vehicle, or the first one for which they have a valid pass if issued
- Show any passes to the driver or other officials when asked
- Follow all instructions from the driver, at all times especially in an emergency
- Wear seatbelts at all times where these are provided, and
- Get off safely at the right stop and cross roads carefully.

For reasons of health and safety children and young people must not:

- Smoke
- Eat or drink
- Stand up vehicle the vehicle is moving
- Lean out of the window or door, run around inside the vehicle, climb on seats
- Refuse to wear a seat belt
- Use threatening physical violence or verbal abuse towards other children, driver or passenger assistant
- Cause damage to seats, seatbelts or other equipment
- Be in possession of dangerous weapon

Where the child or young person's behaviour falls short of the required standards, the Council will work with parents, school and travel providers to rectify problems. The Council retains the right to suspend or remove travel support where this is deemed appropriate.

The Council's responsibilities

Swindon Borough Council are commit to implementing this policy in a fair, open and transparent way. We will treat our service users with respect and maintain good levels of communication with them.

Parent / carerChild or young person

Date Date.....

Under Consultation

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions:

The questions below were provided by parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. Swindon Borough Council have worked collaboratively with Swindon SEND Families Voice to provide this document in response to these questions.

How do I apply for transport?

Under certain circumstances, the Council can arrange assistance with home-to-school travel for eligible pupils resident in the Borough. Decisions about travel are made in accordance with Swindon Borough Council's Education Travel Policy and by the Home to School Travel team, which is published each academic year and can be found on the Schools travel support page on Swindon Borough Council's website through the link below:

<https://www.swindon.gov.uk/>

If your child does not have an Education, Health and Care Plan, and you would like to make an application for travel assistance you can do this via the Schools Travel Support page on Swindon Borough Council's website.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan and you would like to make an application for travel assistance you can do this via <https://swindon-cxm.uat.jadu.net/xfp/form/1558>

When should I apply for transport?

If your child does not have an Education, Health and Care Plan then you can make an application for in-year school travel support at any time. However, please note that applications for the following school year will not be accepted before May in the preceding academic year.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan then you can make an application for in-year school travel support at any time by making an online application.

Please note that applications for the following school year will be considered after school allocation in the preceding academic year.

When will I be told the times for collection/drop-off

If travel assistance has been agreed for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan travel and the mode of travel is:

- a) Independent Travel Option
- b) Provision of a pass for a public service bus or other means of public transport.
- c) Provision of a seat on a bus or minibus provided by the local authority
- d) Provision of a seat in a taxi where individual arrangements are necessary

Then:

- If the application for travel assistance is in-year and made after the start of the academic year the Home to School Travel Team will action this request without delay and seek to confirm travel arrangements within **15 working days** from the date the travel has been authorised. In these cases, you will be advised by letter confirming travel arrangements. This letter will provide you with the company who will be providing the travel provider contact details, and you will need to telephone them to ask what the estimated pick up and drop off times are for your child. Please allow flexibility for the first couple of weeks of a new travel arrangement whilst the route is becoming embedded.

If the travel assistance is for the following school year then you should receive a letter from the Council's Travel Team approximately one week prior to the start of the new school year. This letter will provide you with the company who will be providing the travel arrangement contact details, and you will need to telephone them to ask what the estimated pick up and drop off times are for your child. Please allow flexibility for the first couple of weeks of a new travel arrangement whilst the route is becoming embedded.

Why is it left so late to provide the collection/drop off times?

Swindon Borough Council are responsible for ensuring safe, cost-effective travel services to mainstream, special schools and colleges for children and young people who have been assessed as being eligible. The Council's Travel Team therefore start to construct these plans towards the end of the summer term to ensure minimal changes are made as a result of school placement changes being finalised at the end of term.

What do I do if the times given to me do not suit me or support my child's needs?

Requests for changes in travel arrangements may be considered but adjustments are not always possible for reasons of safety, timings and routings

Once I'm given the timings for collection/drop off will they remain the same every year?

The routes for all travel arrangements are reviewed during the summer term for the proceeding academic year, and may change on an annual basis. Additionally, the timings of travel arrangements may change in-year depending on whether changes are needed to be made to the route, For example, the inclusion of an additional child or a change of address.

Who is on the bus with my child?

Swindon Borough Council are responsible for ensuring safe, cost-effective travel services to mainstream, special schools and colleges for children and young people who have been assessed as eligible. It is likely that the other children in the vehicle will be attending the same provision as your child.

A Passenger Assistant may also be provided depending upon your child or other children on the vehicles Special Educational Needs and / or medical needs

What training do Passenger Assistants and bus drivers receive?

Passenger Assistants are employed by both Swindon Borough Council and transport providers, and receive induction training on the role of the PA in addition to specialist training in Safeguarding, Manual Handling, Emergency First Aid and Safely Managing Challenging Behavior. Training is updated every three years. Passenger Assistants receive annual appraisals in line with Swindon Borough Council policy.

Drivers are employed by travel operators and are required to comply with the terms of the contract with the Council. Quality assessment of contractors is carried out prior to contract award, and all drivers are licensed under the appropriate regime for the class of vehicle they drive. For instance, taxi drivers have to pass a local knowledge and English language test. Minibus drivers have to be accredited under the MiDAS scheme (Minibus Driver Awareness).

All drivers are required to have Enhanced DBS clearance.

If as a result of your child's health needs further training is required to keep them safe on the travel option provided, training will be provided by an appropriate health professional through an individual risk assessment.

What training is given on securing wheelchairs?

Minibus drivers receive training under the MIDAS scheme which covers securing wheelchairs.

What happens if the driver or Passenger Assistant is sick?

If the driver is sick then cover will be arranged by the travel operator as soon as possible in line with the contracts held with transport providers. If this is not possible then in exceptional circumstances the Council may need to 'double run' some routes which will mean that your child may arrive late into school and return home earlier. In some cases, it might be necessary to cancel the route and should this be the case you will be responsible for ensuring that your child gets to and from school.

If the Passenger Assistant is sick, cover is provided from within the pool of casual staff under the Travel Team. As above, in exceptional circumstances it may not be possible to arrange cover and at such times route may need to be rescheduled or cancelled as outlined above.

Will I be able to contact the Passenger transport Assistant at short notice?

We encourage parents, drivers and Passenger Assistants to communicate with each other to ensure the best experience for the child. The majority of Passenger Assistants have Swindon

Borough Council mobile phones and email addresses, if this has not been provided to you please ask the Passenger Assistant on your child's route to provide this to you.

What do I do if my application is denied?

The appeal process is set out in the policy document.

What is the complaints policy?

Service requests and complaints are slightly different. A service request is a contact from a customer that brings a matter to the council's attention for the first time, and requests a service offered by the council, for example, advising of a change of address or requesting a change of arrangements.

A complaint is a where the customer expresses dissatisfaction about the standard of a service, actions, or lack of actions by the council and its staff.

A complaint can be made online by following the link below:

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/customer_services/463/customer_complaints_comments_and_feedback

Concerns with the contracted operational education travel should be raised directly to the Council's Travel Team by contacting the Home to School Travel Team: the relevant Travel Hub:

For Travel North:

- Email: travelnorth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

For Travel South:

- Email: travelsouth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

For the Independent Travel Hub:

- Email: independenttravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

- Email: educationtravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

Do I need to supply a car seat?

Car seats are not required for public transport. However, if your child has specific travel equipment requirements related to their disability, then please provide this information at the point of requesting travel assistance and an assessment will be arranged. We do not

provide car seats this is the responsibility of the parent to provide. In exceptional circumstances and where a risk assessment has highlighted the requirement for the child/young person to be provided with a harness then the Council will provide this.

If you would like your child to travel using a booster seat, this needs to be provided by parents / carers. This equipment may need to be stored at your child's school during the day.

What can I do if I'm unhappy with the service?

Please contact the Council's Travel Team in the first instance to discuss and seek a resolution. If you remain unsatisfied then you should proceed to the complaints route as described above.

Can I request photos of the vehicle, driver and Passenger Assistant?

Yes you can. Please indicate this is required at the time of discussing your travel requirements.

Will my child have an allocated seat that will remain the same?

Not necessarily. If you feel this is required then please share the reasons for this as the time of discussing your travel requirements.

How can I apply for a personal travel budget if I choose to transport my child myself?

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan and you would like to request a personal travel budget please make an online application through the link below and select this option on the form.

<https://www.swindon.gov.uk/xfp/form/962>

Will I be given contact information for driver and Passenger Assistant in case I need to contact them at short notice?

We encourage parents, drivers and Passenger Assistants to communicate with each other to ensure the best experience for the child.

What do I do if my travel option doesn't arrive?

Please contact the Home to School Travel Team Council's Travel Team via the relevant Travel Hub, and inform your child's school:

For Travel North:

- Email: travelnorth@swindon.gov.uk

- Telephone: 01793 464165

For Travel South:

- Email: travelsouth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

For the Independent Travel Hub:

- Email: independenttravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

- Email: educationtravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

Who do you contact when there are issues with the escort / driver?

Please contact the Home to School Travel Team Council's Travel Team via the relevant Travel Hub:

For Travel North:

- Email: travelnorth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

For Travel South:

- Email: travelsouth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

For the Independent Travel Hub:

- Email: independenttravel@swindon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01793 464166

- Email: educationtravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

What do I do if my child is sick (and doesn't need collecting), or I've collected them early from school (so wouldn't need dropping home)?

Please contact your Passenger Assistant if your child has one. If they do not, then please contact the Home to School Travel Team: the relevant Travel Hub:



For Travel North:

- Email: travelnorth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

For Travel South:

- Email: travelsouth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

For the Independent Travel Hub:

- Email: independenttravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

- Email: educationtravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

What do I do if my travel support is not needed one day?

We understand that sometimes travel may not be needed e.g. if your child is sick or not required in school / college. You should contact your passenger assistant (if you have one) and the Council's Travel team as soon as possible.

What happens if there is a change in driver, passenger assistant or route?

In exceptional circumstances for example, illness, bereavement, new children joining a route or children leaving a route we may need to make a change to the driver, route or passenger assistant. You will be notified by the Council's Travel Team of any changes at the earliest opportunity.

Do they have to be dropped off at the same address as they are picked up from?

Travel to and from school will be determined and approved from a single permanent residence. This is the one where the student spends most time with the parent/guardian and has been used for admission purposes and the school.

Travel provisions will be reassessed if there is a change in the home address. The criteria for this for children without an Education, Health and Care Plan is set out in the published Travel Policy.

In exceptional circumstances, consideration will be given to whether a different address can be used however this will include the consideration of the efficient use of resources.

What happens if the travel option breaks down either when my child is on the vehicle or is waiting to be collected?

A replacement vehicle will be allocated and deployed as soon as possible.

Who do I contact if my child is regularly having problems on the journey?

Please refer to the complaints and enquiry question above

Who do I speak to about queries (contact details)?

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, and your query relates to eligibility e.g. to request transport or change your address on an existing travel arrangement you must contact the Home to School Travel team.

If there is a change to or you need to update your contact details for the purpose of travel, please contact the Home to School Travel team.

For any other changes including your child/young person's medication details, then please call your allocated EHCP Coordinator in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Service on 01793 464641 and they will answer your query in 48-96 hours or email SENDService@swindon.gov.uk. You will also need to update the Council's Travel Team, details below: the Home to School Travel Team; the relevant Travel Hub:

For Travel North:

- Email: travelnorth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

For Travel South:

- Email: travelsouth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

For the Independent Travel Hub:

- Email: independenttravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

- Email: educationtravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

If your child does not have an Education, Health and Care Plan please refer to the School travel support page on Swindon Borough Council's website www.swindon.gov.uk.

Appendix C: Useful Links, Legislation and Guidance:

To access any of the below pieces of legislation, guidance, or webpages, simply click which one you would like to view.

Legislation:

[The Education Act 1998 – The Department for Education](#)

[Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 – The Department for Education](#)

[SEND Code of Practice 2014 – The Department for Education](#)

[Children and Families Act 2014 – The Department for Education](#)

Guidance:

[Post 16 Transport and Travel Support to Education and Training 2019 – The Department for Education](#)

[Travel to School for Children of Compulsory School Age 2024 – The Department for Education](#)

Methodology:

[Assessment of Walked Routes to School 2021- Road Safety GB](#)

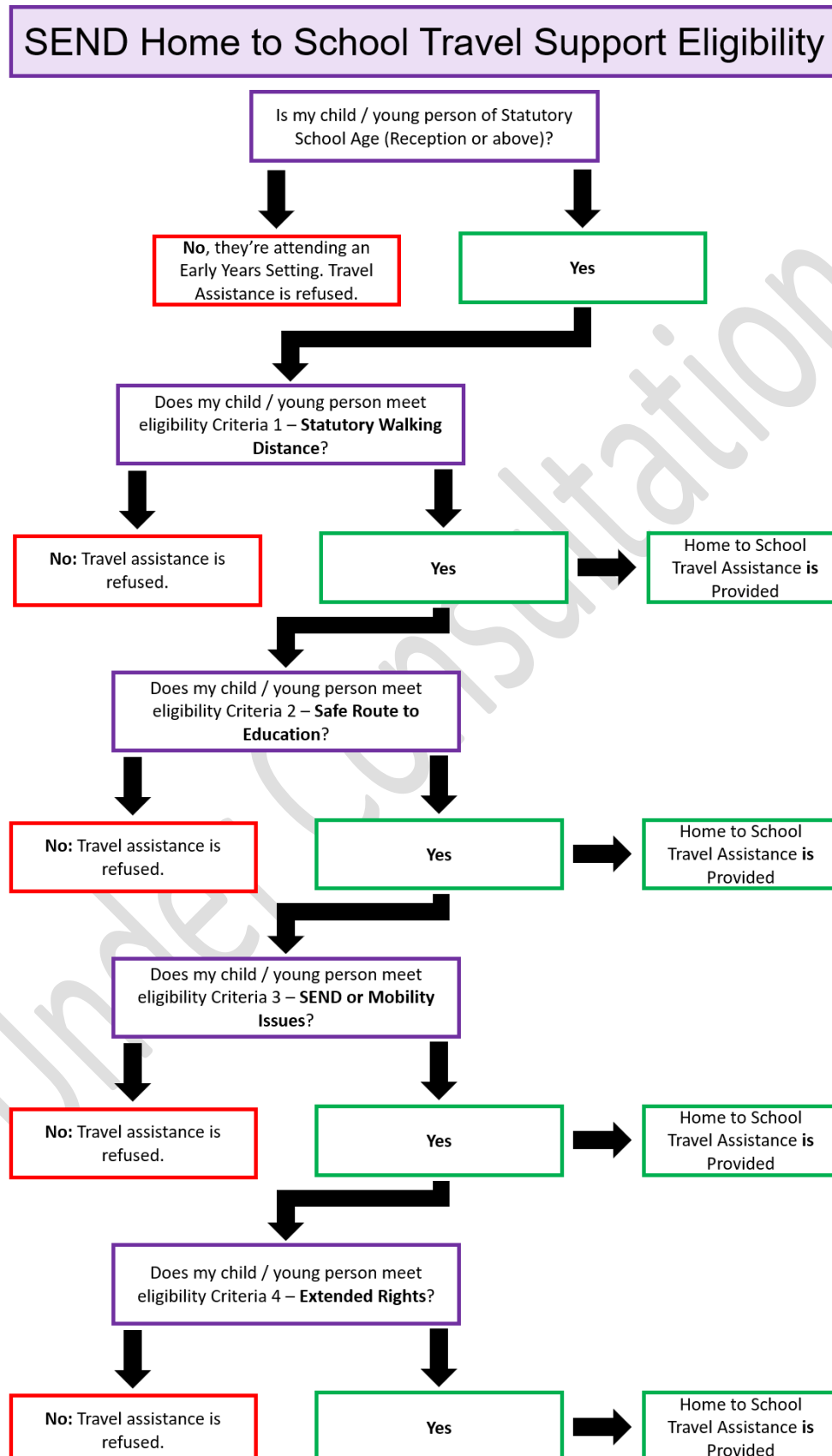
Other Useful Links:

[The Swindon Local Offer](#)

[Swindon Borough Council Website](#)

[The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Website](#)

Appendix D: Eligibility Matrix:



Appendix E: Service Level Agreement Table:

Below includes information on all of the deadlines that Swindon Borough Council have to respond to families accessing the Home to School Travel Service, as well as how long families have to request the next steps (should they wish to appeal).

If we've exceeded this, please let us know by contacting ~~one of the below Travel Hubs~~ the Home to School Travel Team: ~~the relevant Travel Hub:~~

For Travel North:

- Email: travelnorth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

For Travel South:

- Email: travelsouth@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166

For the Independent Travel Hub:

- Email: independenttravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464166
- Email: educationtravel@swindon.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01793 464165

You are also entitled to raise a formal complaint about us not meeting our service level agreement for responding to service users, which you can do through the below link:

[https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contact-us/463/complaints compliments and feedback](https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20022/contact-us/463/complaints-compliments-and-feedback)

What?	Who?	How?	How Long?
Assessing Independent Travel Training (ITT) eligibility.	Home School Travel Team	Written	15 working days from the application
Making changes to travel support following a change of address /	Home School Travel Team	Written	14 working days from notification

other change in information impacting travel support.			
Notifying families of the outcome of their application for home to school travel support ready for the next Academic Year.	Home to School Travel Team	Written via the application portal	15 working days from the application
Notifying families of the outcome of their application for home to school travel support following an in-year application for support.	Home to School Travel Team	Written via the application portal	15 working days from the application
Requesting a Stage 1 appeal following a decision about travel support.	Parent / Carer / Guardian / Young Person	Written	20 working days from the decision
A full response and outcome of the Stage 1 appeal regarding a decision about travel support.	Home to School Travel Team	Written	20 working days from the appeal being received
Requesting a Stage 2 appeal following a Stage 1 appeal about a travel support decision.	Parent / Carer / Guardian / Young Person	Written	20 working days from the Stage 1 outcome being issued
Organising an appeal meeting between the relevant parties regarding a Stage 2 appeal.	Swindon Borough council	Written	40 days following the Stage 2 appeal being received
A full response and outcome of the Stage 2 appeal regarding a decision about travel support.	Home to School Travel Team	Written and Verbal	5 working days from the decision being made