

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY
FOR PUPILS WITHOUT AN EHCP



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This policy sets out the assistance available from Wandsworth Council for pupils aged under 16 who do not have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) under the Council's statutory duties under the Education Act 1996 and statutory guidance issued by the DFE.

2. FREE BUS TRAVEL

- 2.1 All children under 16 in full time education can travel **free** on bus and tram services. In the event that the pupil's home to school journey can be taken reasonably by bus and/or by foot, no further assistance will be provided.
- 2.2 All school pupils 11-15 will be required to carry a 'Zip' Oyster Photocard to travel free on buses and trams. They must touch in as they board a bus or at the tram stop before boarding a tram. If they do not they will be liable for a penalty fare. All 11-15 year olds who do not have a valid Zip Oyster Photocard must pay the full adult cash fare until they get one.
- 2.3 To enquire about obtaining a Zip Oyster Photocard parents/carers should visit the Transport for London (TFL) website at www.tfl.gov.uk. TFL can also be contacted on their helpline at 0343 222 1234.

3. HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVELCARDS

- 3.1 Pupils aged under 16 who, in the judgement of the Director of Children's Services, have an unreasonable journey to school using bus or tram services, may be entitled to assistance with the cost of rail and/or underground travel to and from school.
- 3.2 To qualify for a free Travelcard the pupil must meet *all four* of the following requirements:
- **Residence:** The child must live in the borough of Wandsworth.
 - **Distance:** The distance from your home to the school, using the shortest walking route with street lighting as measured by the council's Geographical Information System, must be over 3 miles (for child aged 8 and over) or two miles (for a child aged under 8).
 - **Journey:** The child's journey can only reasonably be made by train or tube (i.e. bus or tram travel is impractical).
 - **School:** The child must be attending the 'nearest suitable qualifying school' to your home. (Wandsworth Council will take account of a parent's preference for a faith school).
- 3.3 In addition, the Council will provide a free Travelcard for a child from a low-income family (families entitled to free school meals or receiving the maximum level of Working Tax Credit) where either:
- The child aged between 11 and 16 years attends one of the three nearest maintained schools or academies between 2 miles and 6 miles from their home; or

- The child aged between 11 and 16 years attends the nearest maintained school or academy, for which the parent has applied on the grounds of their religion, between 2 miles and 15 miles from their home.

3.4 The Council reserves the right provide financial assistance for home to school travel in cases where the Director of Children's Services agrees that there are exceptional circumstances.

4. HOW TO APPLY

4.1 To apply for assistance parents/carers should complete the application form available at on the Council's website at www.wandsworth.gov.uk/apply-for-home-to-school-travel-assistance/. Further information is available on this web page and by contacting the Pupil Services Team. A list of FAQs is also given in the appendix to this policy.

4.2 The Pupil Services Team will write to Parents/Carers notifying them of the outcome of their application within 20 working days of receipt of the application.

5. RIGHT OF APPEAL

5.1 In the event that a parent/carer is dissatisfied with the outcome of their application, they have the right to appeal against that decision. The appeals process has two stages as set out below:

Stage 1: Review by a Senior Officer.

5.2 If the parent/carer is dissatisfied with the decision not to issue a travelcard, they can appeal by emailing the Wandsworth Pupil Services team at admissions@wandsworth.gov.uk outlining why the Council should review its decision and include any information they would like to be considered as part of the review. The parent should submit their written appeal within 20 working days. The Head of Pupil Services will then review the decision in light of the information provided by the parent/carer and advise the parent of the outcome within 20 working days.

Stage 2: Review by an Independent Appeal Panel.

5.3 If the parent/carer is dissatisfied with the decision made at Stage 1, they may escalate their appeal to be considered by an Independent Appeal Panel. Details of how to do this will be provided in the Stage 1 notification. The parent must submit their written appeal within 20 working days indicating why they wish to escalate the matter to stage two, and to provide any additional information that they wish to be considered in light of the stage one decision.

5.4 The Council will make arrangements for an independent panel to review the case. The panel members will be independent of the original decision-making process.

5.5 Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to attend the appeal hearing if they wish, either virtually or in person, to present their case. Where a parent does not wish or is unable to attend a hearing, the panel will make its decision based on the parent's written representations. The independent hearing will take place within 40 working days of receipt of their Stage 2 appeal.

- 5.6 Within 5 working days of completing its considerations, the appeal panel should notify the parent in writing of the outcome of their review.

6. DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Reasonable journey time. In line with the DFE statutory guidance, the maximum journey time by bus for a child of primary school age is considered to be 45 minutes each way, and 75 minutes each way for a child of secondary school age.
- 6.2 Qualifying schools are defined as:
- community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools;
 - academies (including those which are free schools, university technical colleges, studio schools and special schools);
 - alternative provision academies;
 - community or foundation special schools;
 - non-maintained special schools;
 - pupil referral units;
 - maintained nursery schools (where attended by a child of compulsory school age); and
 - city technology colleges and city colleges for the technology of the arts.

APPENDIX – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **How is the distance from home to school measured?**

The Council uses its Geographical Information System to calculate the shortest walking route with street lighting. We use the same method for every application, so that everyone is treated fairly.

- **What is the ‘nearest suitable school’?**

The ‘nearest suitable school’ means the nearest Community school, Foundation school and Academy, or the nearest Faith school. If your child has a place at a school of one of these types, and there is no school of that type nearer to your home, either inside or outside the borough of Wandsworth, you will qualify for a Travelcard. The decision will be based on whether a place was available at your nearest suitable school when you originally applied (or should have applied) for a school place.

- **What if my child was refused a place at the ‘nearest suitable school’?**

If you applied to your ‘nearest suitable school’ and you were refused, you might still qualify for a Travelcard. You should state on your application form any schools which you applied for, but were refused a place. In order to qualify for a Travelcard you will need to have been refused a place at **all** of your ‘nearest suitable schools’ and you will be asked to provide a copy of the refusal letter(s).

(If you ranked the school your child is attending more highly in your secondary transfer preferences than the ‘nearest suitable school’ you **will not** be eligible for assistance.)

- **What if my child attends the same type of school further away than the ‘nearest suitable school’, but both schools are over the qualifying distance?**

If the ‘nearest suitable school’ to your home is over the qualifying distance (3 miles), the council will provide the cost of travel to ‘the nearest suitable school’ and you will need to pay the difference. Payment will be made by reimbursement.

- **Are there any types of school that don’t qualify?**

We only award Travelcards for children attending state schools and academies. We do not award Travelcards for children attending private fee-paying schools.

- **What if my child goes to school outside Wandsworth?**

If your child attends a school outside Wandsworth, you may still qualify for a Travelcard if you meet all four qualifying requirements (see page 1).

- **What if I have an older child at the same school?**

If you have an older child who was awarded a Travelcard, it does not mean you will automatically get a pass for a younger child. Your younger child will have to meet all the requirements of the policy, as described above.