



## **Policy on: Travel Support to Access Education**

For children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



**MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL**



# **Policy on: Travel Support to Access Education**

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# Travel Support to Access Education

## 1.0 Introduction

This policy outlines the travel support available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to access education.

This policy is set out in three parts as follows:

**Part A** - Travel support to access education for children and young people of age 16 and under.

**Part B** - Travel support to access education/training for young people Post 16

**Part C** - Application, Review and Appeals processes

The Council is developing a new approach to disability, to encompass all disabled adults and children living in Manchester. This has at its heart a focus on the person and their family, looking at all aspects of an individual and their family's situation. Through this approach, the Council's vision is that disabled citizens should have the same life opportunities and achieve the same outcomes, across key areas such as; education, choice and control, health; employment, housing and inclusive communities, as those which are available for the wider population.

This policy on Travel Support to Access Education aims to support the achievement of these outcomes through a new way of supporting children and young people with significant Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) to access education based upon the needs of the child or young person and their family. The aim of this policy is wherever possible to work with the family and young person to develop a travel solution enabling the child or young person to access education in the same way that members of their peer group who do not have a special educational need or disability would access their education. This includes travelling independently for young people and family based travel solutions for younger children. The desired outcome of this approach is to actively encourage children and young people's independence, which can result in them developing a skill for life and will help to develop their confidence and social skills as well as increase their future options for continuing education/training and employment.

The majority of Manchester children and young people with special educational needs or a disability including those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan) do not receive or require specialised travel support from the Council in order to access education. Wherever possible, it is expected that parent/carers of children and young people with SEN or a disability make arrangements for their child to attend school in the same way as for parents/carers of children and young people who do not have SEND. This approach, including independent travel where appropriate, is an important factor in developing the children and young people's independence, social and life skills; providing a travel support framework to enable as many parents/carers to do this as possible, is a key part of this policy.

Specifically, this policy relates to children and young people with significant SEND, which will usually mean those with a Statement, Learning Difficulty Assessment

(LDA) or EHC plan but may in exceptional circumstances, apply to those who are undergoing assessment for an EHC plan.

This policy explains the entitlement to travel support to access education for children and young people that have significant SEND. The Council's general policy on travel to and from mainstream schools and other education establishments is available separately. Please see the Schools Admissions Travel Policy.

For the purpose of simplicity in the language used in this policy, EHC plan will be deemed to include those children and young people who currently have a statement of SEN or a LDA that has not yet transferred to an EHC plan.

This policy applies to children and young people who are resident within the City of Manchester and children and young people in the care of Manchester City Council.

## **2.0 Principles**

Manchester City Council's policy on Travel Support to Access Education is based on providing parents/carers with a travel solution which will be founded on the following principles.

- It is committed to ensuring children and young people can fulfil their potential. The aim of this policy is that all children and young people with significant special educational needs or disability should lead lives that are as independent and as free from restriction as possible
- Promoting inclusive opportunities to enable children and young people to travel to and from school or college independently or using family based approaches similar to those used by other children and young people wherever possible, taking account of their age and needs
- Promoting sustainable, safe, healthy and appropriate travel solutions by working in partnership with parents/carers to support them with their legal responsibility to make sure their children attend school
- A commitment to equality of opportunity and the celebration of diversity and an opposition to all forms of discrimination
- Efficient use of public resources, delivering better outcomes and providing better value for money.

## **Part A**

### **Travel support to access education for children and young people from statutory school to age 16**

This part of the policy is for children and young people of compulsory school age to the age of 16 with SEND. This policy supports children and young people with Statements of SEN or Education Health and Care Plans (EHC plans) to access school at the start of the school day and return home at the end of the school day, each week day during school terms.

#### **3.0 Legislation and Responsibilities**

##### **3.1 Parent/Carers Responsibilities**

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their compulsory school aged children are registered at a school and attend regularly, or to make suitable arrangements for home education. However, in certain circumstances a Council has a duty to provide travel support to access education to facilitate this attendance.

Parents/carers are responsible for their child's safety whilst travelling to and from school. Where the Council has provided a travel solution to support a child to access education, parents/carers remain responsible for their child's safety before and after these arrangements take place.

##### **3.2 Council Responsibilities**

In certain circumstances the Council has a statutory duty to provide a suitable travel solution to facilitate a child and young person's attendance at school. This document sets out Manchester City Council's policy on Travel Support to Access Education. It describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as required under the Education Act 1996.

Young people with SEND who are over the age of 16 and under 25 but continuing in education/training are considered separately in Part B.

Under section 508B of the Education Act 1996, the Council has a duty to ensure that a suitable travel solution is made for an eligible child/young person. This will be carried out, where necessary, to facilitate the child and young person's attendance at a relevant \*'qualifying school'. The Act applies to all children and young people who permanently live in Manchester and attend a qualifying school named in their Statement of SEN or EHC plan.

This policy reflects national legislation. Eligibility for a place at a school does not bring with it an entitlement for travel support to access education. The policy on Travel Support to Access Education could change before a child and young person completes their time at school. Admission choices should not be made on the assumption that the same set of eligibility criteria will apply throughout a child and young person's education.

\* Go to Appendix A to see definitions of 'eligible' and 'qualifying school'.

## **4.0 Eligibility for a home to school travel solution**

### **4.1 Parental preference for a school**

Whilst parents/carers have the right to express a preference for which school they wish their child to attend, a child and young person who attends a school which is further away than the nearest suitable qualifying school with places available, will not be eligible for travel support, except in exceptional circumstances, even if the distance from home to the school they attend is more than the qualifying walking distance.

Any travelling arrangements or expenses will be the responsibility of parents/carers if there is a nearer suitable qualifying school. It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure their child gets to and from school safely and they should consider the practicalities of choosing a school that is not within the qualifying walking distance (see below).

### **4.2 Travel Support Requirements**

Travel support to access education will be agreed for children and young people with a Statement of SEN, or EHC plan where a parent/carer is not getting the higher rate Mobility and Disability Living Allowance and:

- The child/young person lives further than the statutory walking distance between home and school, which is over two miles for children under eight years of age or over three miles for children aged eight years old and over and the child has a Statement of SEN or an EHC plan and
- The child/young person attends the named school the Council has determined in the Statement of SEN/EHC plan as being the nearest available school that is able to meet the needs of the child or young person

OR

- The child/young person lives within the statutory walking distance but is unable to walk relatively short distances to school owing to disability or mobility difficulties (these may include temporary medical conditions) and family circumstances make it not reasonable to expect the parent/carer to take their child/young person to school

Travel support may be considered using supporting written evidence, (within the last 12 months), from a range of sources, for example, Education or health professionals, parents and other relevant professionals, that describes the young person as having:

- Long term severely restricted independent mobility, due to a physical disability
- Long term severely restricted independent mobility due to a medical condition resulting in severe persistent pain and/or extreme fatigue
- A sensory impairment resulting in severely restricted mobility
- Severe behavioural emotional and /or social difficulties in comparison with other young people of their age. This may be linked with cognitive ability or be as a result of a specific development disorder

This is not an exhaustive list and requests will be considered on a case by case basis. **Note:** "Long term" describes something that is likely to last for at least a year and in many cases for the rest of the life of the person affected.

### **4.3 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children**

There is an expectation that where parents/carers are in receipt of the higher rate of DLA, with a higher mobility element for their child and where this has been used to hire a vehicle, a travel solution will not be provided. Parents/carers are expected to use this vehicle to support their child to school. If a parent/carer uses their own car, in these circumstances, they may apply for a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) from the Council.

DLA for children may help with the extra costs of looking after a child who is under 16 and has difficulties walking or needs support additional to that needed by a child of the same age without a disability. If a parent/carer is eligible to receive the mobility higher rate for their child, help may be available from the Motability scheme to lease or buy a car. If the parent/carer does not drive, two people can be nominated to drive the car instead. It may also be possible to lease a scooter or powered wheelchair.

### **4.4 Travel support for children and young people from Low Income Families:**

The defined eligibility criteria apply to all children and young people. However, where the families of children and young people of statutory school age are entitled to free school meals, and/or are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC), this will be taken into consideration in the development of a suitable travel solution for the family.

Where a parent/carer is in receipt of WTC, a copy of the awards notice, showing the maximum level will need to be provided. Families providing proof of low income will be assessed at the point of application and annually thereafter.

### **4.5 Exceptional Circumstances**

In addition to those outlined above, there are some additional, exceptional circumstances in which travel support to access education may be given.

Specific consideration **will be** given to:

- Child/young person who has a temporary disability or illness
- Child/young person with parents/carers who have medical needs or learning difficulties who are unable to represent themselves

It is important to bear in mind the decision to provide travel support to access education is based on the child and young person's needs. When determining whether to offer travel support those factors to which consideration will not normally be given are listed below.

Consideration **will not** normally be given to:

- Parents' work or other commitments
- Personal circumstances when considering drop off/collection points and times
- If a parent chooses to send their child to a school that is not the nearest suitable qualifying school to the home address
- A journey from one educational establishment to another, including for off site training
- Induction days, taster days, open days or interviews

- Work experience
- School trips (for journeys of this nature the organising school or institution will be responsible for travel arrangements)
- Dental, medical or hospital appointments, or other non-educational appointments
- Children taken ill during the day
- Children who are excluded during the day
- Examination timetables – travel will not be tailored to examination timetables; it will only be provided at the standard school start and finish times
- Out of hours clubs (breakfast club, after school activities); for journeys of this nature parents/carers will be responsible for travel arrangements
- Where the child is staying in Short Break (respite) care - requests for support to and from Short Break or Residential Care should be directed to Social Care within the Council's Children and Family Service.

In these instances, a travel solution will be the sole responsibility of the child or young person's parent/carer.

## **5.0 Travel Solutions**

This section outlines the travel solutions which may be provided for children and young people who meet the eligibility criteria and are 16 or under. Specifically, this section of the policy relates to children and young people who have a Statement of SEN or an EHC plan and are attending the nearest suitable qualifying school identified in their Statement of SEN/EHC plan.

The parent/carer responsibilities are stated in **3.1**.

If Manchester City Council agrees to provide a travel solution to access education it will be provided in a safe and cost effective manner, taking account of the child and young person's specific needs and having regard to the best use of the Council's resources.

An initial assessment of the child and young person's eligibility for travel support to access education will be made by a Travel Officer from the Council. It is very important that parents/carers participate in this assessment to ensure the full details of their child's circumstances are clear so the right level of support can be determined. Cases are considered on an individual basis and medical or other professional evidence may be required before support is agreed.

The Council reserves the right to assess the whole family according to their circumstances, in order to offer the most cost effective travel support, using a variety of solutions. The travel solution will be child/young person centred and inclusive of their needs in order to develop independence and confidence.

Taxi or minibus travel support to access education will be provided only where there is no feasible alternative.

The Council will assist parents/carers with a travel solution at the beginning and end of each school day. For weekly and termly boarding schools, a travel solution will be identified at the beginning and end of the week/term where children and young

people have SEND.

A travel solution will only be provided for the normal start and end of the school day and will not include early finish times where schools close early for the end of the half term / term.

The Council is also committed to reducing traffic congestion, improving road safety and reducing the environmental impact of vehicle journeys by promoting alternative forms of travel, such as walking, cycling and use of integrated public transport. The Council works closely with schools to develop School Travel Plans that help to achieve this aim wherever possible. In the provision of travel support to access education, the Council will consider support options for eligible children/young people that lead to reducing the number and length of vehicle journeys.

Where a travel solution is put in place and either the child and young person fails to utilise the facility or their school attendance falls to 85% or below, travel support may be withdrawn. In some cases a recharge for the service may be passed onto the parent/carer where there has been persistent failure to notify the Travel Co-ordination Unit of non-attendance. Until attendance meets the desired requirements, travel support will remain withdrawn. We understand that some children and young people with SEND can be exceptionally unwell and in these cases once the Travel Co-ordination Unit is notified of this, a service will only be temporarily withdrawn and will be reinstated once the individual is well enough to return to Education.

### **5.1 Types of travel solutions provided**

The nature and mode of travel support will be determined by the Council and will be one that is consistent with the Council's duty to secure Value for Money and the needs of the child.

**a. Bicycle** - A one off payment may be made when a child or young person, who is eligible for support under the Council's policy, would like to use or uses a bicycle to travel to school. This solution can also include a programme of independent travel training to ensure the young person is able to safely cycle to and from school if required.

**b. Walking Bus** - The Council is keen to reduce the number of vehicle journeys in and around the City, especially at peak times and reduce traffic movements in close proximity to schools. A child/young person may be allocated a space on a walking bus scheme. These involve several children/young people walking to and from school under the guidance and support of a Passenger Assistant.

**c. Travel pass** - This is a free pass for use on public transport. This may also be provided for a parent/carer or another travel buddy to support the child/young person to access education.

**d. Personal Travel Budget (PTB)** – Support for meeting the costs associated with ensuring support to access education may be provided through a Personal Travel Budget. This includes a variety of flexible support options such as: access to funds for parent/carers to enable them to drop earlier and collect later, paying for a

family member, mileage and use of a befriending service. Family based travel solutions could also be supported by a Personal Travel Budget.

**e. Supported public transport** - It may be possible for a child or young person to travel on public transport if the child/young person has some assistance. Where parents/carers are unable to accompany their son/daughter, the Council may provide a Passenger Assistant, befriending service and/or a travel buddy.

**f. Manchester Travel Training Partnership** - The Council has a responsibility to promote appropriate independence skills. All young people will be supported and encouraged to travel independently to and from school, when it is assessed as reasonable for them to do so. Where a young person is offered independent travel training the process will begin with an initial assessment of their skills and abilities. The training provided will be targeted to individual need and development. It is expected that where independent travel training is offered as a travel solution, a young person will take up this training.

As part of the review process, young people in Year 8 onwards identified as being suitable, will be expected to attend a full week taster session. An assessment will be completed to ascertain a young person's suitability.

Top-up training will be available to support children and young people with transition when moving schools.

**g. Travel Vehicles** - In exceptional circumstances the Council may provide a vehicle to transfer a child and young person to and from school. Vehicles and drivers are provided by a suitably qualified, registered, commercial provider working to contractual standards set by the Council. All drivers will all have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate.

This could include:

Multiple pick up Vehicles - Whenever possible, children and young people will travel together in mini-buses. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those children and young people travelling on them. Each route will be planned on the basis of school start and finish times and the shortest possible route for all children and young people travelling on a particular vehicle. A multiple pick up vehicle may include a Passenger Assistant to support passengers from point of handover to drop off destination. The Passenger Assistant is responsible for the safe handover over to a responsible adult. Passenger Assistants will all have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate.

Children and young people will be picked up and dropped off at a convenient location, within a reasonable distance from their home, in many cases from recognised bus stops. A home pick up and drop off will only be made where it is deemed essential due to the child and young person's significant needs.

In exceptional circumstances, where there are surplus places on a multi pick-up vehicle, it may be possible for parent/carers to purchase a seat for a child/young person with SEND who has not met the eligibility criteria. The cost will not be in

excess of the cost of an annual travel pass. This would be subject to availability and/or change, as needs for eligible passengers take priority. A notice period, where possible, would be given, if the surplus place is no longer available.

Taxis and private hire vehicles - Under very exceptional circumstances, the Council may support children and young people to access education in separate taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the child or young person. A Passenger Assistant will not always be necessary. Where a Passenger Assistant is not deployed, a passenger must travel in the rear of the vehicle. There is an expectation parent/carers will support their child into the rear of the vehicle. Parents/carers can act as a Passenger Assistant for their child in a taxi or a private hire vehicle.

## **Part B**

### **Travel support to access education/training for young people Post 16.**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

Part B applies to young people who are resident within the City of Manchester who are above statutory school age and aged over 16 but under 25. It specifically relates to young people with SEND who are unable to travel to and from education and/or training independently at the start and end of the school and college day.

The Council has a discretionary power to provide travel support to those over compulsory school age. A travel solution for attending their designated/qualifying school/college which provides the desired courses will reflect individual needs. The desired outcome of this approach is to actively encourage young people to travel as independently as possible and to develop confidence and vital travel and social skills to support options for continuing education, training and employment thereafter.

A contribution towards the cost of a travel solution will be sought from the parent/carer and if over 18 years, the individual themselves. Charges will not exceed the cost of a bus pass for students age 17 to 25. The likely duration of the learning will also be taken into account.

#### **7.0 Legislation and Responsibilities**

##### **7.1 Parent/Carer and Young People's Responsibilities**

A young person must stay in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday if they were born on or after 1 September 1997.

Options are:

- full-time education - e.g. at a school or college
- an apprenticeship or traineeship
- part-time education or training - as well as being employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week

A young person can leave school on the last Friday in June as long as they will be 18 by the end of that year's summer holidays.

There is an expectation parents/carers will actively promote and support their young person to access and attend education and training.

##### **7.2 Council Responsibilities**

Section 509AB(1) of the Education Act 1996 imposes a requirement that the Council should set out the extent to which the arrangements specified in the statement of SEN/EHC plan can facilitate the attendance at schools and colleges of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The 16-18 transport duty relates to young people of sixth form age with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged up to 19.

The Council also has a duty under the Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 25 in education and training.

Children and Families Act 2014 - The Act replaces the Statement of SEN and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) for those over the age of 16 with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Under the Act, the Council may continue to maintain an EHC plan for young people over 19 if a young person requires additional time, in comparison to the majority of others of the same age who do not have SEN, to complete his or her education or training. Local authorities may continue to provide special educational provision until the end of the academic year in which the young person turns 25.

## **8.0 Eligibility Criteria**

Travel Support may be provided for young people over 16 with an EHC plan or a Statement of SEN/LDA who are attending a \*full time school or college course and:

- Attend a designated/qualifying school or college outlined by the Council as the appropriate establishment that meets the needs of the young person and
- A young person attends a school or college more than 3 miles from their home address

Where the distance to be travelled is less than 3 miles, travel support will be considered, taking into account the individual circumstances and the travel needs of the young person with SEND that prevents them from accessing education or training independently.

In addition to those outlined above, there are some additional, exceptional circumstances in which travel support to access education may be given.

Specific consideration **will be** given to:

- A young person who has a temporary disability or illness
- A young person with parents/carers who have medical needs or learning difficulties who are unable to represent themselves

## **8.1 Travel Support Requirements**

Travel support may be considered using supporting written evidence, (within the last 12 months), from a range of sources, for example, Education or health professionals, parents and other relevant professionals, that describes the young person as having:

- Long term severely restricted independent mobility, due to a physical disability
- Long term severely restricted independent mobility due to a medical condition resulting in severe persistent pain and/or extreme fatigue
- A sensory impairment resulting in severely restricted mobility
- Severe behavioural emotional and /or social difficulties in comparison with other young people of their age. This may be linked with cognitive ability or be as a result of a specific development disorder

\* Full time education for Post 16 is education undertaken in pursuit of a course, where an average of more than 12 hours per week is spent during term time.

This is not an exhaustive list and requests will be considered on a case by case basis. **Note:** “Long term” describes something that is likely to last for at least a year and in many cases for the rest of the life of the person affected.

It is important to bear in mind the decision to provide travel support to access education is based on the young person’s needs. When determining whether to offer travel support those factors to which consideration will not normally be given are listed as in Section 4.5. Please refer to Section 4 for the full list of Eligibility Criteria and exceptional circumstances.

## **8.2 EHC plan beyond the age of 18**

Where an EHC plan is in place beyond the age of 18, applications for subsidised travel support will only be considered once funding for an education or training provision has been agreed. There is an expectation that applications must be submitted on an annual basis; at the same time as the request to extend the education and or training provision.

Please see Appendix B - Flow Chart, outlining provisions and eligibility for continuing travel support.

## **9.0 Travel Solutions**

A travel solution for a young person is in line with travel support to access education for children and young people of compulsory school age.

### **9.1 Types of travel solutions provided**

The nature and mode of travel support will be determined by the Council and will be one that is consistent with the council’s duty to secure value for money and the needs of the young person.

**a. Bicycle** - A one off payment may be made when a young person, who is eligible for support under the Council’s policy, would like to use or uses a bicycle to travel to school. This solution can also include a programme of independent travel training to ensure the young person is able to safely cycle to and from school/college if required.

**b. Walking Bus** - The Council is keen to reduce the number of vehicle journeys in and around the City, especially at peak times and reduce traffic movements in close proximity to schools. A young person may be allocated a space on a walking bus scheme. These involve several young people walking to and from school/college under the guidance and support of a Passenger Assistant.

**c. Travel pass** - This is a free pass for use on public transport. This may also be provided for a parent/carer or another travel buddy to support the young person to access education.

**d. Personal Travel Budget (PTB)** – Support for meeting the costs associated with ensuring support to access education may be provided through a Personal Travel Budget. This includes a variety of flexible support options such as: access to funds for parent/carers to enable them to drop earlier and collect later, paying for a

family member, mileage and use of a befriending service. Family based travel solutions could also be supported by a Personal Travel Budget.

**e. Supported public transport** - It may be possible for a young person to travel on public transport if the young person has some assistance. Where parents/carers are unable to accompany their son/daughter, the Council may provide a Passenger Assistant, befriending service and/or a travel buddy.

**f. Manchester Travel Training Partnership** - The Council has a responsibility to promote appropriate independence skills. All young people will be supported and encouraged to travel independently to and from school, when it is assessed as reasonable for them to do so. Where a young person is offered independent travel training the process will begin with an initial assessment of their skills and abilities. The training provided will be targeted to individual need and development. It is expected that where independent travel training is offered as a travel solution, a young person will take up this training.

Top-up training will be available to support children and young people with transition when moving schools.

**g. Travel Vehicles** - In exceptional circumstances the Council may provide a vehicle to transfer a young person to and from school/college. Vehicles and drivers are provided by a suitably qualified, registered, commercial provider working to contractual standards set by the Council. All drivers will all have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate.

This could include:

Multiple pick up vehicles - Whenever possible, young people will travel together in mini-buses. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those young people travelling on them. Each route will be planned on the basis of school/college start and finish times and the shortest possible route for all young people travelling on a particular vehicle. A multiple pick up vehicle may include a Passenger Assistant to support passengers from point of handover to drop off destination. The Passenger Assistant is responsible for the safe handover over to a responsible adult. Passenger Assistants will all have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate.

Young people will be picked up and dropped off at a convenient location, within a reasonable distance from their home, in many cases from recognised bus stops. A home pick up and drop off will only be made where it is deemed essential due to the young person's significant needs.

In exceptional circumstances, where there are surplus places on a multi pick-up vehicle, it may be possible for parent/carers to purchase a seat for a young person with SEND who has not met eligibility criteria. The cost will not be in excess of the cost of an annual travel pass. This would be subject to availability and/or change, as needs for eligible passengers take priority. A notice period, where possible, would be given, if the surplus place is no longer available.

Taxis and private hire vehicles - Under very exceptional circumstances, the Council

may support young people to access education in separate taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the young person. A Passenger Assistant will not always be necessary. Where a Passenger Assistant is not deployed, a passenger must travel in the rear of the vehicle. There is an expectation parent/carers will support their child into the rear of the vehicle. Parents/carers can act as a Passenger Assistant for their child in a taxi or a private hire vehicle.

## 9.2 Transports for Greater Manchester

In addition, travel support can be obtained from Concessionary Fares operated by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).

A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) may be offered to support with the following:

- **Concessionary Travel** - is offered to disabled people, whatever their age. Depending on individual circumstances this can be free or cheap travel on buses, trains and the Metro link. More information can be obtained from TfGM on 0161 244 1050.
- **Ring and Ride Service** - provides door-to-door transport for people who find it very difficult or impossible to get to a bus stop or get on or off ordinary buses. The service is not intended for daily travel to or from school/college, but could help a young person with other journeys. The Manchester Ring and Ride Service can be accessed via <http://www.ringandride.info/index.htm>. Telephone Enquiries: 0845 688 4933 or 0161 200 6011, Telephone Bookings: 0845 688 3989.
- **Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES)** - provides transport for young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability who meet their transport assessment criteria. Telephone: 0161 234 5640, Email: [adult-education@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:adult-education@manchester.gov.uk)
- **A Travel Voucher Scheme** - is available for people who are unable to use ordinary buses and who have serious walking difficulties or are registered blind. Vouchers are not free, but are substantially discounted. If young people have any queries about the scheme, they should phone TfGM on 0161 244 1050.
- **Address:**  
2 Piccadilly Place  
Manchester  
M1 3BG  
  
Tel: 0161 244 1000 General enquiries (7am to 8pm, Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm Saturday and Sunday)

## **Part C**

### **Application, Review and Appeals processes.**

#### **11.0 Application Process**

The parent/carer or young person must make a formal application for travel support to access education before any assistance is considered. Each application will be processed as quickly as possible in chronological date order of receipt. The Council may request the provision of written evidence from education specialists and/or medical experts.

It remains the legal responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their compulsory school aged child attends school regularly.

In most cases, travel support to access education will be co-ordinated by the Council's Travel Co-ordination Unit. In some cases this responsibility may lie with specific named schools and/or colleges. Therefore, parents/carers and young people should check the local arrangements at their child and young person's school or college before making an application for travel support to the Council.

#### **11.1 Application Overview**

The application process is designed to be as simple as possible whilst ensuring that full consideration is given to the specific needs of the child or young person. An initial evaluation will then determine whether travel support to access education is likely to be approved. The parent/carer/young person will be informed of the outcome within 10 working days of receiving the application. Parents/carers/young person should allow up to 30 working days from the date the application was received to the start of any approved travel support to access education.

If the application form does not contain enough information to complete the initial evaluation it will be returned to the parent/carer/young person. The 30 day consultation period will commence on the receipt of the updated application.

#### **11.2 The application process is dealt with in four stages:**

##### **Stage 1**

Parent/carer/young person completes a Travel Assistance Application Form. This application form can be obtained from:

- [www.manchester.gov.uk/info/40/special\\_educational\\_needs-transport/1856/travel\\_coordination\\_unit/2](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/40/special_educational_needs-transport/1856/travel_coordination_unit/2)
- The Council's Customer Services Centre 0161 219 6400
- The information pack issued during your child's SEN assessment

Once this form has been completed it should be returned to:

Travel Co-ordination Unit,  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
Universal Square,  
Devonshire Street North,

Manchester,  
M12 6JH.

Email to: [hometoschool@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:hometoschool@manchester.gov.uk)

### **Stage 2 – Receipt of the application**

On receipt of the application an assessment of eligibility will be undertaken. This stage will include the gathering and evaluation of written evidence and parental circumstances. It will usually include consultation with the school/college concerned, caseworkers and any other relevant specialists and the parent/carer/young person.

At this stage the application will either progress to Stage 3 or be declined. The parent/carer/young person will receive a letter notifying them of the decision and the letter will outline the reasons for the decision.

### **Stage 3 – Risk Assessment of child/young person’s travel requirements**

Once the application has been approved a Travel Review Officer will contact the parent/carer/young person and make arrangements for a home visit. The Officer will complete and discuss with the parent/carer/young person the travel review paperwork. This is to determine the needs of the child/young person including their physical, medical, health and behavioural information. This will form a risk assessment which the parents/carers/young person will be asked to sign during the home visit. The Officer will also ask, where appropriate, the parent/carer and/or the child/young person to sign a Code of Conduct. The Travel Co-ordination Unit reserves the right to withdraw the travel solution if the child/young person or parent/carer refuses to sign the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct outlines seven rules to which children and young people must abide by to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others when travelling to and from school/college.

### **Stage 4 – Deciding on a travel solution**

The Logistics Team in consultation with the Travel Review Officer will determine a travel solution. The Logistics Team make all the necessary arrangements to implement the travel solution.

Parents/carers and a young person should allow up to 30 working days from the date the application was received to the start of any approved travel support to access education and training. If the application appears likely to take longer due to specific circumstances beyond the control of the Council, the parent/carer/young person will be notified by the Council and an estimate of the actual time needed to process the application will be given.

### **12.0 Review process**

The travel solution will be reviewed on a regular basis in order to ensure the support offered continues to meet the needs of the child/young person. Whenever possible, travel solutions will be reviewed alongside EHC plan annual reviews and at transition points for year 6 to 7, year 11 to 12, year 14 to 15 and year 17 to 18.

A Travel Review Officer will contact the parent/carer/young person to arrange a home visit to review the risk assessment and child/young person’s information. This will include a review of the child/young person’s needs and the travel solution. At this

stage alternative travel solutions may be discussed including transition to Independent Travel Training.

### **12.1 Changes in Circumstances**

It is the parent/carers/young person's responsibility to inform the Council of any changes in their circumstances. A change in circumstances may mean a previously declined application may be accepted and the parent/carer/young person is able to reapply. In addition, a change in circumstances for an existing travel solution may mean it no longer meets the eligibility criteria and the travel solution could be withdrawn. The Council will decide when the withdrawal of a travel solution takes place and will take into account the term and year of education and the impact on the child/young person.

#### **Changes in circumstances include:**

- A change in home address
- A move from one school to another
- Transition from primary to secondary school and transition from secondary school to college
- A change in medical and physical conditions
- A move into Local Authority care

### **13.0 Health and Safety**

Whilst every effort is made to come up with a travel solution to meet the needs of a child/young person there will be circumstances when the travel solution will need to be reviewed as it is not working. Whilst acknowledging the impact of their SEND on the behaviour of some children and young people, where a child/young person's conduct compromises the safety of anyone travelling with them, the Council reserves the right to suspend or withdraw the travel solution.

There is an expectation that the parent/carer and/or the child/young person signs a Code of Conduct. The Travel Co-ordination Unit reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a travel solution if the child/young person or parent/carer refuses to sign the Code of Conduct.

A travel solution will be withdrawn if for example, but not limited to:

- It is felt that the child or young person has the capacity to learn from this sanction and a 'cooling off' period would be beneficial
- The child or young person's continued presence in a vehicle (where this is the travel solution) presents an unacceptable risk to the health or safety of themselves or others

The Council reserves the right to immediately withdraw a travel solution if the severity of the incident is such that withdrawal is necessary to ensure that the duty of care for the child/young person or other children/young people and staff is maintained. Parents/carers will be expected to ensure their child's and young person's continued attendance at school when a travel solution is withdrawn.

Analysis of the risk will be made of any given incident and the following procedures will be put in place:

- On issue of the first suspension the case will be reviewed on an individual basis
- A second issue of suspension may be given, if once travel support resumes, improvements are not maintained
- At the issue of a third suspension and upon consideration of all circumstances, the existing travel solution will be reviewed and may be removed. A new solution will be offered following discussion with the Education staff and the child/young person's family.

## **14.0 Appeals Process**

If an application for travel support to access education is **not** approved by the Council, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer/young person with an appeals form.

If the parent/carer/young person disagrees with the travel solution offered or the decision not to approve the application, there is a right of appeal.

Appeals should be made within 20 working days of the decision being received by the parent/carer/young person. The appeal should be made in writing, setting out the exact nature and grounds of the appeal. The Appeal should include the details of personal and or family circumstances the parent/carer/young person believes should be considered. Parents/carers/young person can appeal against the travel solution offered, the child/young person's eligibility, distance measured in relation to statutory walking distances and safety of the route.

### **14.1 The Appeals Process has two stages:**

#### **Stage 1 – Appeal of the original decision**

The Delivery Co-ordinator will consider the appeal. The Appeals Form is available from the Council's Customer Service Centre 0161 219 6400, by writing to:

Travel Co-ordination Unit,  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
Universal Square,  
Devonshire Street North,  
Manchester,  
M12 6JH.

Email to: [hometoschool@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:hometoschool@manchester.gov.uk)

The parent/carer/young person will receive confirmation the appeal is being considered. Further evidence may be requested to support the appeal and consultation with caseworkers and professional bodies may be required. A decision and notification will be made within 20 working days from receipt of the appeals form.

The notification will include the nature of the decision reached, how the appeal was conducted and information about other agencies and departments that were consulted as part of the appeal process. An overview will be given of the factors that were considered, the rationale for the decision reached and information of how to proceed to Stage 2.

If the parent/carer/young person remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they should notify the Council in writing within 20 working days of receiving the appeal decision. If the parent/carer wishes the matter to be considered further, the parent/carer/young person should request the matter proceeds to Appeal to Stage 2.

## **Stage 2**

If the parent/carer/young person is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal at Stage 1 the appeal moves to Stage 2. The appeal will be heard independently from the Travel Co-ordination Unit by a minimum of two Reviewing Officers who are independent from the Travel Co-ordination Unit.

A Stage Two appeal will consider the evidence gathered and the reasons for the decision being made at Stage 1. A decision will be made within 40 working days. The parent/carer/young person will be notified 5 working days after the decision for the Stage 2 appeal. In some cases a meeting with the parent/carer/young person may be necessary.

The notification to the parent/carer/young person will include the nature of the decision reached, how the appeal was conducted, information about other agencies/departments that were consulted as part of the appeal process and what factors were considered and the rationale for the decision reached.

During the appeal stages, travel support to access education will not be provided **or** a change to an existing travel solution will not be instigated.

A Stage 2 decision is final.

## **14.2 Corporate Complaints Team**

If the parent/carer/young person is dissatisfied with the way in which the appeals procedure has been managed they have the right to make a formal complaint to the Corporate Complaints Team.

This is not an additional stage to the appeals process.

Corporate Complaints Team  
Manchester City Council,  
PO Box 532 Town Hall,  
Manchester,  
M60 2LA

Email: [csfeedback@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:csfeedback@manchester.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0161 234 3012

## **14.3 Local Government Ombudsmen**

A complaint to the Local Government Ombudsmen can be made by the parent/carer/young person only if there has been a failure to comply with the procedural rules or there has been maladministration of the policy.

Telephone: 0300 061 0614.

Alternatively, you can write to:

The Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771

Coventry CV4 0EH

Fax: 024 7682 0001

You can also text 'call back' to 0762 481 1595.

## Appendix A

<b>Glossary of standard definitions used in the policy</b>	
<p>Parent / Carer</p>	<p>In this policy parent/carer is taken to mean the adult responsible for the child/young person and can refer to the adult who has parental responsibility, guardianship or care of the child.</p> <p>Looked after child (LAC) A child who is being looked after by the local authority is known as a child in care. In UK law children in care are referred to as "looked after children". A child is "looked after" if they are in the care of the local authority for more than 24 hours.</p> <p>A child will stop being "looked after" when they are either adopted, returned home or turn 18. The local authority will continue to support children leaving care at 18 until they reach 21.</p> <p>Children in care can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living with foster parents</li> <li>• At home with their parents as a Looked After Child/young person under the supervision of social services</li> <li>• In residential children's homes or other residential settings such as schools or secure units.</li> </ul>
<p>Eligible child/ young person</p>	<p>An eligible child and young person is one of compulsory school age who is resident within Manchester and has SEND.</p> <p>Eligible children as defined in Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 may be taken to belong to one of the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Educational Needs (SEN), a disability or mobility difficulty who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of the nature of the route (accompanied as necessary)</li> <li>• Living outside the statutory walking distance, where no suitable alternative arrangements have been made by the Local Authority for them to attend either boarding accommodation or a qualifying school nearer to the child young person's home.</li> <li>• Entitled to free school meals, and/ or whose family is in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.</li> </ul>
<p>Compulsory school age</p>	<p>A child becomes of compulsory school age when he/she reaches the age of five and must start school in the term following his/her fifth birthday.</p> <p>In England, a young person's leaving age depends on when the young person was born. A young person must stay in some form of education or training until your 18th birthday if you were born on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 1997.</p> <p>A young person's options are:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full-time education – e.g. at a school or college</li> <li>• an apprenticeship or traineeship</li> <li>• part-time education or training - as well as being employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week</li> </ul>
Qualifying school	<p>The nearest qualifying school is taken to mean the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child/young person and any special educational needs that the child/young person may have.</p> <p>For a child/young person with SEND, the school named on their Statement / EHC Plan will be their qualifying school.</p>
Home	<p>The home address will be the main base from which any travel solution will be offered.</p> <p>If the child/young person lives in two different homes, for example if the parents are separated from the child's mother or father, and the child spends some of the week at both homes, the Council will only provide transport to and from one of those addresses.</p> <p>To decide which of the homes is the child's main home, the Council will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The address at which the parent claims Working Tax Credit and Child Benefit</li> <li>• The address the parent gives as the child's doctor, dentist and so on</li> </ul> <p>If the above does not apply and the child spends an equal amount of the school week at each address, the council will usually consider the main address to be the one where the child wakes up on the most school days during the school term (Monday to Friday).</p>
Education, Health and Care plan	<p>An education, health and care (EHC) plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support.</p> <p>EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.</p> <p>Parents can ask the local authority to carry out an assessment if parents think the child needs an EHC plan.</p>
Statement of Educational Needs	<p>A statement of special education needs describes the child's educational needs and how the needs should be met, including what school the child should go to.</p> <p>Special educational needs (SEN) that affect a child's ability to learn can include their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behaviour or ability to socialise, e.g. not being able to make</li> </ul>

	<p>friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading and writing, e.g. they have dyslexia</li> <li>• ability to understand things</li> <li>• concentration levels, e.g. they have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</li> <li>• physical needs or impairments</li> </ul> <p>Under new legislation implemented from September 2014 if a child has an existing statement it must be replaced by an Education, Health and Care plan by spring 2018</p>
Learning Difficulty Assessment	<p>An LDA is designed to support young people with post 16 education and or training and is a transition from a Statement of Educational Needs.</p> <p>Having determined that a young person requires a LDA a local authority must continue to support the young person up to the age of 25 if they stay in further education or training (provided they still have learning difficulties).</p> <p>Under new legislation implemented from September 2014 , if a young person has an existing LDA this must be replaced by an Education, Health and Care plan by September 2016</p>

**Appendix B  
Post 16 Eligibility**

