

Home to School Travel Policy

In Bristol we want to ensure all children and young people are as independent and successful as possible in their adult lives. This will be different for each child or young person and therefore we plan and work together to enable individuals to:

- Get a job, become employable or be engaged in meaningful activity
- Live as independently as possible
- Actively participate in community life – have friends and personal interests
- Be as healthy as possible

Travelling as independently as possible plays an important role in how children and young people achieve these 'Preparing for Adulthood outcomes' and live ordinary lives.

For children and young people who are not yet able to travel independently, we want them to have opportunities to travel between home and school in as ordinary way as possible.

This includes:

- How far and how long they travel - time to study, play or relax
- Who they travel with – we want children and young people to travel with people who know them best, and family or friends
- Opportunities in which to develop the skills necessary for independent travel – self-regulation, resilience, social interaction and social communication skills, anxiety-management, problem solving, time-keeping etc.

Our first emphasis is always on supporting and advising families to support their own children/ young people. Where additional support is needed it will always be by the most inclusive and least specialist form of travel possible, to ensure that travel supports a child/ young person's wider outcomes.

Children and young people with SEND have choice and control in accessing services (including educational settings), social opportunities and participation opportunities. We want children and young people with SEND to feel the valuable part they play in society and access opportunities to be with all peers, including those without SEND.

Home to school travel provision applies to home (the place where the child is habitually and normally resident) to school (the educational setting where the child is on roll) travel arrangements, and vice versa. This does not relate to travel between educational institutions or other provision during the usual school day.

Please note, a 'suitable' school is the **nearest qualifying Bristol school** (community, foundation or voluntary schools, community or federation special schools, non-maintained special schools, pupil referral units, maintained nursery schools, city technical colleges, city colleges for the technology of the arts or academies, including free schools and university technical colleges) with **places available** that provides education appropriate to the **age, ability and aptitude** of the child, and any **SEN** that the child or young person may have.

Best practice suggests that the maximum each way journey for a child of **primary school age** to be **45 minutes** and a young person of **secondary school age, 75 minutes**. However, these should be regarded as the absolute **maximum** travel times.

The Department for Education's general expectation is that a child will be accompanied where necessary between home and school by his or her parent, carer or legal guardian.

Eligibility Criterion:

- **Statutory walking distances:**

If the pupil is of **compulsory school age** (5-16) and their **nearest suitable Bristol school** is:

Beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8 years)

Beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16 years)

Please note: this age range has not been changed by the raising of the participation age.

- **Extended rights (Children from low income families):**

The LA provides free HTST where pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to **Free School Meals** or their **parents are in receipt of the highest level of Working Tax Credits** if:

The nearest suitable Bristol primary school is beyond 2 miles (up to age 11).

The pupil is attending one of the three nearest suitable Bristol secondary schools that is beyond 2 miles (aged **11-16 years**).

The school is between **2 and 15 miles** and is the **nearest Bristol school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief** (if aged 11-16 years).

- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:**

If the pupil cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school (accompanied by a parent/carers as necessary and considering the age of the child, as well as whether one would normally expect a child of that age to be accompanied) because of **mobility problems** or because of **associated health and safety issues related to their SEN or Disability**.

Eligibility for children with SEND is assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular transport requirements. Usual transport requirements (E.g. the statutory walking distances) are not considered when assessing the transport needs of children eligible due to SEN and/ or disability.

The pupil **must be attending the nearest suitable school or a setting named on his or her EHC Plan**, following formal consultation by the SEN Team, rather than a setting named due to parental preference.

Route suitability:

When assessing the suitability of the route used to measure the distance from a child/ young person's home address to the school, we give consideration to a number of factors that might apply at the time the child or young person would be expected to walk the route (accompanied as necessary) in order to attend school for their **full statutory education hours** during usual timetabled school hours.

- **Unsafe route eligibility:**

We will provide advice and support for travel arrangements for families of children and young people who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest appropriate school because the **nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk** (accompanied by a parent/carer as necessary).

- **Residential Placements:**

The frequency for journeys between home and school/ college is agreed between the Local Authority, schools, young people and parents and carers in the first instance. Travel to residential placements will normally be agreed for the **beginning and end of each term only**. All applications are renewed annually.

- **Children and young people with disabled parents:**

The Local Authority promotes and ensures equality of opportunity for disabled parents. Where a child or young person needs to be accompanied along a route that would be deemed unsafe without adult supervision, but a parent/carer cannot do that because they are themselves a disabled person (medical reports / other evidence is required) then a reasonable adjustment might be to provide home to school travel for the child in question.

- **Compulsory school age children in temporary accommodation:**

Children from low income families who have been moved to **temporary local authority accommodation**, such as a bed and breakfast, can get free travel for **up to two terms**. This is so they can keep going to the same school while arrangements are made for transition to the nearest suitable school. The temporary local authority accommodation address must be **beyond 2 miles** from school, and the child must have been attending their nearest suitable school **before** they moved into temporary local authority accommodation. Children who are in Key Stage 4 (year 10 & 11) at the time of being moved will be supported in their current school until the end of Key Stage 4, as long as the school remains beyond 2 miles from the child's temporary local authority accommodation address.

- **Pupils over 16 years with SEND:**

Support is available due to a physical impairment, or other special educational needs (usually as evidenced in an Education Health and Care Plan or Statement, and or medical reports) of which the nature and severity means the pupil is unable to walk to his or her educational setting, even where this is a relatively short distance. **This support is only available for students who are on full time courses until the end of the academic year in which they are 19 years.** All applications need to be renewed annually.

- **Children in Care**

Children in Care are assessed for support within the ethos of the full Home to School Travel Policy and they need to be empowered to become more independent with travel, developing skills that will be extremely valuable in their future. How a young person is supported in travelling to and from school can be an important aspect of their social inclusion and, in the longer term, vital for attaining maximum independence and life choices.

A range of options for support with travel should be available and reviewed at regular intervals throughout a young person's education/care. The mode of travel will be determined by the HTST Team in conjunction with Passenger Transport Services in terms of any existing routes.

Where a young person is placed with a **Bristol foster carer** we will endeavour to support that young person to travel as independently as possible (accompanied as necessary). If the mode of travel is determined to be a **taxi/minibus** this must be **reviewed within a 17 week period** and the HTST Team will be involved in this.

In very exceptional circumstances (such as where interim care orders are in place pending final decisions) a young person may be placed in a care placement Out Of Authority but have sound educational reasons for continuing at their current school in Bristol. **In such circumstances in full consultation with Social Care, Travel may be funded for an agreed amount of time on a 50/50 basis between Social Care and the Home to School Travel Team.** (It should be noted that in circumstances such as these (i.e. joint funded) the responsibility for setting up travel will be with Social Care). It is important to note that journey time for some young people placed out of Authority does not exceed recommended DfE guidelines and if a child has SEN then this also needs should also be considered.

Where a child is placed due to their care needs rather than educational reasons then **Social Care will be responsible for travel costs** and no contribution will be made by HTST. It is normally expected that **Social Care will review the travel support within 17 weeks in conjunction with the Young Person's PEP statement** if the child has an **EHCP**.

Funding will then only continue beyond 17 weeks where it is deemed appropriate for educational reasons and these will be agreed on a case by case basis by a named individual in consultation with the social worker.

Where a child is placed within an IFA:

In line with page 84 of the current National Framework Contract for Independent Fostering Agency placements:

'The provider or their carers are expected to fund the day to day travel needs for children/young people placed within a 20 mile radius. This agreement shall be specified in the individual Placement Agreement (IPA).'

It is important to note that radius will differ from the journey measured post code to post code. Where the journey exceeds the 20 mile radius HTST will reimburse the additional mileage. This will be discussed and agreed on a case by case basis.

The HTST Team is not responsible for the administration relating to other local authorities and IFA travel arrangements.

- **Pupils over 16 years attending courses outside of the local area:**
Applications for support with travel from disabled students to colleges outside the area will be considered, if the course is considered to be the **nearest appropriate course** for the student.
- **Support for students with SEND over 19 years:**
On a case by case basis students over 19 and up to the age of 25 may be considered for support with travel. Should support be granted, they will need to apply annually and decisions will be reviewed based on any changing needs, changes in circumstances, progression in learning etc.

Please see the following Local Offer information for further details:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/bristol-local-offer>

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/school-travel>

How to apply

If a child meets criteria for support with travel in line with the Home to School Travel policy, parent/carers can access an application form in the following ways:

- Home to School Travel website at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/school-travel>
- Online application form <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schooltravelform>
- E-mail: home.school.travel@bristol.gov.uk

Parents and carers will be informed of the decision in writing.

Review Procedure

If an application has been refused, the parents/carers of a child have a right to a review of the decision.

In addition to the statement on the form, parents/carers need to include any other supporting information.

The legal responsibility for ensuring a child's attendance at school rests with the parents/carers whilst they await the outcome of the review.

Inconvenience to Parent/carers is not considered a reason for providing travel support.

Appeals

Following the review, if parents/carers are still of the opinion that their child should be given travel support, they are entitled to make an appeal to a panel of elected members. Appeals must be made within four weeks of the review decision otherwise the Local Authority's decision will stand.

Parent/carers cannot appeal against the policy alone because they do not agree with it. They have to be appealing because they believe they should be made an exception to the policy.

Please contact:-

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Email: home.school.travel@bristol.gov.uk