

Issued February 2023

Policy on: Travel Support to Access Education

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

Statutory school age pupils 5 to 16
(Reception to Year 11)



**MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL**

Policy on: Travel Support to Access Education

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Travel Support to Access Education for children and young people aged 5-16 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

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 for children and young people of statutory school aged 5 to 16 (Reception to Year 11). There is a separate policy for children of statutory school age and for young people aged 16-25 with separate provisions for those aged 19-25.

This policy is set out in two parts as follows:

Part A - Travel support to access education for children and young people aged 5 to 16;
and

Part B - Application, Review and Appeals processes.

The Council's approach to disability, 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 supporting children and young people with 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, regularly developing solutions with the [Manchester Travel Training Partnership](#). 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 an Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan) do not receive or require travel support from the Council in order to access education. An EHC plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

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.

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.

Specifically, this policy relates to children and young people with SEND, which will usually mean those with an EHC Plan but may in exceptional circumstances, apply to those who are undergoing assessment for an EHC plan. It requires that eligibility for such pupils should be assessed on an individual basis to identify the pupil's individual transport requirements. 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.

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. The policy defines home to school transport as between a pupil's main home address and their school. A pupil's main home address is the place where they are habitually and normally resident. Where pupils have more than one address, home to school transport will be based on the residence where the pupil habitually resides or where the pupil resides for majority of the school week.

Transport assistance can only be provided on the basis of assessed need, rather than parental preference. Other family circumstances, such as parents and carers attending work or looking after other children, cannot be considered when determining eligibility.

All parents and carers requiring transport assistance for their child should submit an application for transport assistance. Only on receipt of an application will be transport assistance be considered.

Only where a pupil is assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria set out in this policy, will they be entitled to assistance with transport between home and school. Manchester City Council will assess and consider home to school transport on the basis of the most efficient and cost-effective use of the Council resources.

The policy has been developed in consultation with parents, carers and young people and is based on the statutory requirements placed on councils in the Education Act 1996, and the guidance in

[Home to School Travel and Transport: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities \(Department for Education, 2014\)](#),

the guidance in

[Post16 Transport and Travel Support to Education and Training: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities](#)

as well as the

[Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children \(Department for Education, 2015\)](#).

It takes account of the [Local Offer](#).

Further information on the Education Act 1996 can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/508A>

and also <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/508B>

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; and
- 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 of statutory school aged 5 to 16 (Reception to Year 11)

This policy is for children and young people of statutory school age to the age of 16 with SEND. This policy supports children and young people with 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.

This policy applies only to home to school travel arrangements. It does not, for example, relate to transport to sports facilities, work experience or work placements, medical, dental or hospital appointments, visits to other schools or locations (including school trips), collection from school due to illness or exclusion, parental attendance at meetings, travel to or from extended hours school clubs or exams.

3.0 Legislation and Responsibilities

3.1 Parent/Carers Responsibilities

- 3.1.1. 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.
- 3.1.2. 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.
- 3.1.3. 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. 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 their 18th birthday. A young person's options are:
 - full-time education – e.g. at a school or college; or
 - an apprenticeship or traineeship; or
 - part-time education or training - as well as being employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week; or
 - an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency; or
 - learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the Council: for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

3.2 Council Responsibilities

- 3.2.1. In certain circumstances the Council has a statutory duty to provide a suitable travel solution to facilitate a child/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.

- 3.2.2. Young people with SEND who are over the age of 16 and under 25 but continuing in education/training are considered in a separate policy.
- 3.2.3. 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 nearest qualifying school is taken to mean the nearest suitable 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. For a child/young person with SEND, the school named on their EHC Plan will be their qualifying school, or it is the nearest of two or more schools named.
- 3.2.4. The Act applies to all children and young people who permanently live in Manchester and attend a qualifying school named in their EHC plan.
- 3.2.5. The Council is also required to make transport arrangements for all pupils who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest qualifying school (accompanied as necessary) because the nature of the route is deemed inappropriate, or because of mobility difficulties or because of the pupil's associated health and safety issues related to their SEND.
- 3.2.6. Councils do not have a duty to provide or arrange free transport for children who have not yet reached statutory school age. However, transport assistance applications will be considered for children below statutory school age in exceptional circumstances and it is expected that such children will have an education, health and care plan.
- 3.2.7. 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/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/young person's education.
- 3.2.8. Consideration of any future transport needs will form part of the young person's transition into adulthood plan. In line with the national policy, all young people in year 11 (aged 15 to 16), moving from compulsory schooling to post-16 education, must reapply and be reassessed. If your child is in Year 11, you will need to reapply for transport, and applications for transport will be assessed against the 16 to 19 Transport Policy available [here](#) or upon request to 0161 219 6400. 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 key transition points in a child or young person's education.
- 3.2.9. It should also be noted that a change in circumstances 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;
- A change in medical and physical conditions; or
- A move into Council care.

3.2.10. Travel arrangements will be regularly reviewed and this is of particular importance for pupils who are in Year 7 and above, who will be beginning their final phase of compulsory education and who may not receive any further transport assistance or a more independence-focused transport assistance offer after they leave school to attend their choice of further education placement or employment. Based on the outcome of reviews, the Council will make any changes necessary to transport arrangements which are the result of a pupil's changing needs. For example, a pupil may no longer require a passenger assistant or may be ready to start independent travel training.

3.2.11. The provision of transport assistance will also be reviewed to reflect any changes in government policy or legislation

4.0 Eligibility for a home to school travel solution

4.1 Parental preference for a school

- 4.1.1. The nearest qualifying school is one that the Council deems to be suitable for the age, ability, aptitude and ability of the pupil and any SEND they may have.
- 4.1.2. Parents and carers may express a preference for any maintained school or any form of academy or free school they wish their child to attend. If a parent or carer does express a preference for their child to attend a school further away than the nearest qualifying school, then the Council reserve the right to refuse transport assistance to that school.
- 4.1.3. Only where a pupil is assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria set out in this policy, will they be entitled to assistance with transport between home and school.
- 4.1.4. Any travelling arrangements or expenses will be the responsibility of parents/carers if there is a nearer qualifying school. It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure their child gets to and from school safely to the nearest qualifying school.

4.2 Travel Support Requirements

- 4.2.1. When assessing entitlement for transport assistance for pupils with SEND, the Council's Home to School Transport Team will consider the individual needs of each child. This may include taking professional advice from educational psychologists, medical officers and teachers and consulting with parents and carers before arriving at a final decision. Consideration will also be given to the pupil's physical and medical requirements including any disabilities they may have. Assessment may include face-to-face contact with the pupil. The findings and decision will be recorded on a transport assessment form.
- 4.2.2. In determining whether a pupil cannot reasonably be expected to walk between home and school, the service will consider whether the pupil could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and, if so, whether the pupil's parent or carer can reasonably be expected to accompany their child. The general expectation is that a child will be accompanied by a parent or carer, unless there is good reason why it is not reasonable to expect the parent to do so. For example, if a parent's disability prevents them from accompanying their child along a walking route that would otherwise be considered unsafe without adult supervision, a reasonable adjustment might be to provide free home to school transport for the child in question.
- 4.2.3. The following factors will be consideration when assessing transport entitlement:
 - the age of the pupil;
 - the distance of the pupil from school to home;
 - whether the walking route is appropriate for the pupil;
 - the SEND of the pupil;
 - whether the pupil has physical, medical or a social communication difficulty that would prevent them from using public transport, even if accompanied by an adult;
 - whether suitable and accessible public transport is available;
 - whether the pupil may be vulnerable and at risk of danger if they use public or

- other transport;
- whether the pupil would be a danger to drivers, other passengers or the vehicle if using public or other transport;
- the efficient utilisation of resources; and
- any other individual circumstance.

4.2.4 This is not an exhaustive list. It is not presented in any particular order and is for guidance only. Satisfaction of one or more of the criteria does not automatically entitle a pupil with SEND to transport assistance. The fact that a pupil has an EHC Plan or attends a special school does not automatically entitle him or her to transport assistance.

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

4.2.6 The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice states that transport should be recorded in an EHC Plan only in exceptional cases, where the child or young person has particular transport needs.

4.2.7 Pupils who are not eligible for transport assistance but have short-term difficulties (for example, a short-term illness or health difficulty) may be eligible for transport assistance to and from school during the period of the short-term difficulties. Detail on the support provided by the Council in relation to these short-term difficulties is set out below:

4.2.7.1 **Pupils receiving bus transport provision:** where a pupil receives home to school transport from a minibus and cannot get to and from a collection point (for example, due to a broken leg or other short-term illness) temporary assistance may be offered as replacement for this service. Although the child's SEND has not changed, temporary physical or medical constraints make it difficult for the child to access the service.

4.2.7.2 **Pupils who have temporarily changed address:** assistance may not be provided where a pupil who usually receives assistance moves to a different address in the short-term if the changed address results in additional transport costs. The parent or carer will be expected to pay any additional costs associated with the short-term move, or make their own transport arrangements. It is understood however that there may be some circumstances where temporary changes of addresses may be required that are in the best interests of the child e.g. for safeguarding purposes, due to housing issues beyond the family's control, fleeing domestic abuse, temporary family care due to illness of parent. Whilst a reassessment of travel assistance will take place as a result of the change of address, the specific individual circumstances

and the needs of the child to continue to access education will be taken into consideration.'

- 4.2.7.3 **Parents with a disability or illness:** where a parent with a disability or illness has difficulty in getting their child to and from school, additional support may be provided by adult social care services within the Council.
- 4.2.7.4 **Parents with authorised mileage allowances:** temporary assistance may be provided in those instances where parents or carers in receipt of authorised mileage allowances cannot transport their child to and from school due to a short-term illness.
- 4.2.7.5 **Respite and foster care:** While providing transport to and from respite and foster care is not a statutory duty, the Council recognises that respite care provides valuable and necessary support to parents and carers. Applications for transport from a respite care placement to the pupil's school will therefore be considered. It is the responsibility of the parents or carers to notify the Home to School Transport Team of the dates of respite at least 10 days in advance to allow sufficient time to plan the transport. However, 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 0161 219 6400.
- 4.2.7.6 **Re-housed children:** If a family has moved to an address within a different council area, the responsibility for the child's EHC Plan and their home to school transport transfers to the Council area in which they are residing. This is because the family have become ordinarily resident in the new area. This is the case regardless of which council is paying the family's housing costs and regardless of whether the family intend to move back to Manchester in the future.
- 4.2.7.7 **Dual and link placements, inclusion and pupil referral units:** Dual placements are where a pupil attends more than one school, or where a school arranges a college link placement for a pupil. Dual placements may require additional transport assistance, such as transport at earlier or later times, or during the school day. Schools are responsible for arranging and paying for the cost of such transport. Where a pupil is on roll at one school, but visits another school or college for inclusion or link purposes, the school where the pupil is usually based will be responsible for arranging and paying for transport. These arrangements also apply to alternative education arranged by the pupil's school. If a pupil is on roll at a pupil referral unit as their sole placement, then eligibility for transport to the pupil referral unit will be considered on the same basis as eligibility for transport to any other school.
- 4.2.7.8 **Residential schools:** Pupils attending termly boarding school placements funded by the Council for a standard 38-week academic year (and who are eligible for transport assistance) will be provided with transport assistance between home and school for the start and end of each term period (generally half-termly). This equates to 12 one-way journeys (four journeys a term). Pupils attending weekly boarding school placements funded by the Council will be provided with weekly

transport. Transport for pupils in 52-week residential school placements funded by the Council will be agreed on an individual basis.

- 4.2.7.9 Transport assistance for any pupils attending termly boarding school placements will not exceed the 12 one-way journeys. If the school is closed on a weekly or fortnightly basis, this must be reflected in the fees being paid by the Council for the school placement and, accordingly, transport will be provided to coincide with school closure.
- 4.2.7.10 Transport assistance will not be provided to parents, carers or family members who wish to visit residential schools for any reason. Any arrangements of this nature will need to be agreed directly with the school. In exceptional cases, parents or carers may be provided with transport assistance to school a maximum of once per year to attend their child's annual review.
- 4.2.7.11 Parents or carers who wish to accompany their child on the first day at school will be expected to make their own transport arrangements. Where a school stipulates that a parent or carer should attend on the first day, private transport must be arranged.

4.3 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children

- 4.3.1 The parents of some children/young people may be in receipt of the higher rate mobility component (HRMC) of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA). This is the gateway to the Motability scheme that supplies vehicles, adapted or unadapted, in return for the DLA, usually on contract hire terms. If a child or young person is the HRMC recipient and the family obtain a vehicle through the Motability scheme, then the vehicle is supposed to be used for the benefit of the disabled child/young person. However when determining whether or not to provide travel assistance, MCC will not take account of a Motability car where this has been provided for the benefit of the child/young person nor will take account of the HRMC of the DLA or PIP with a mobility component.
- 4.3.2 The Department for Education has confirmed in Parliament that being in receipt of the HRMC of the DLA does not necessarily confer eligibility for free travel assistance but neither does it preclude it if the child is an eligible child
- 4.3.3 Should a child/young person be eligible for travel support from the Council, if a parent/carer chooses to use their own car, then they may apply for a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) from the Council and this may be agreed to should it offer a best value solution

4.4 Travel support for children and young people with SEND from Low Income Families

- 4.4.1 The defined eligibility criteria apply to all children and young people. However, where the families of children and young people of statutory school age with SEND are entitled to free school meals, and/ or in receipt of their maximum Working Tax Credit (WTC), this will be taken into consideration in the development of a suitable travel solution.
- 4.4.2 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.

5.0 Travel Solutions

5.1 Travel Solutions outlined

- 5.1.1 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 an EHC Plan and are attending the nearest suitable qualifying school identified in their EHC plan.
- 5.1.2 If the 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.

- 5.1.3 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 in reviewing the application form completed by the parents/carers. It is very important that parents/carers provide the full details of their child's circumstances to ensure that they are clear to ensure 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.
- 5.1.4 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.
- 5.1.5 Taxi or minibus travel support to access education will be provided only where there is no feasible alternative.
- 5.1.6 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.
- 5.1.7 Where a pupil cannot attend school on any particular day (for example, due to illness), it is the parent's or carer's responsibility to contact the service immediately.
- 5.1.8 For long-term absences, parents or carers should also inform the Home to School Transport Service. Parents and carers should contact the service the day before travel if they know then that their child will be unwell on the following day.
- 5.1.9 Alternatively, they should contact the service as early as possible on the morning of travel if their child only shows signs of being unwell on the day he or she is due to travel. All transport which is not cancelled in advance of the vehicle arriving at the home address must be paid for by the Council whether or not the pupil boards the vehicle.
- 5.1.10 Where parents or carers repeatedly fail to cancel transport provision for their child before it arrives at the home address, or where a pupil suddenly refuses to travel in transport which has arrived on any given day (without any prior notice having been given to the transport company), the pupil's transport provision will be reviewed.
- 5.1.11 Where it can be established that public funds are being used inappropriately, as a result of vehicles not being cancelled with sufficient prior warning, pupils may not be allowed to travel on transport for a period of time. Parents and carers will be responsible for transporting their own children during any period of exclusion from transport

5.2 Types of travel solutions provided

The nature and mode of travel support may take one of the following forms:

- 5.2.1. **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.
- 5.2.2. **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.
- 5.2.3. **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.
- 5.2.4. **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.
- 5.2.5. **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.
- 5.2.6. **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. Further information on this Partnership can be found through clicking this link here: [Manchester Travel Training Partnership](http://ManchesterTravelTrainingPartnership.org) or go to www.mttp-travel-training.org
 - 5.2.6.1. 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.
 - 5.2.6.2. Top-up training will be available to support children and young people with transition when moving schools
- 5.2.7. **Driving Lessons** - The offer of funded driving lessons where the young person is the correct age and this is the most cost-efficient option. Students can drive a car when they are 16 if they have, or have applied for, the enhanced rate of the

mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

5.2.8. **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 have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate. All drivers and guides taking pupils to and from school and related services will have undertaken appropriate training, and that this will be kept up to date. This could include:

5.2.6.2 **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. All vehicles will offer standards of comfort and safety as prescribed by relevant legislation. 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. Pupils must expect to travel to and from school with other pupils unless there are exceptional circumstances where it would not be reasonable to expect a pupil to do so and increasingly, they may be asked to travel to a designated collection point.

Most children will be allocated a pick-up point for collection and drop off. Home pick-ups will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances. Pick up points will be reviewed from time to time and can be subject to change. When allocating pick up and drop off times for pupils they are based on the most efficient route. Planning the routes to run efficiently and keeping travel times to a minimum is a priority. Therefore, it is not possible to take family circumstances into consideration when allocating these times. Parents/Carers are given an approximate pick up and drop off time for their child, which is subject to change for various reasons throughout the school year. This could include children/young people being added/removed, route efficiency, traffic, road works etc.

Parents/Carers are expected to have their child ready on time for collection and be there on time at the end of the day for collection from transport. It is understood that on rare occasions circumstances may arise which are out of a Parent/Carer's control which mean the child is not ready on time. On such occasions, the vehicle may wait up to 5 minutes past the scheduled pickup time in the morning.

Should Parents/Carers be consistently late, including collecting from the vehicle in the afternoon, then travel assistance may be removed temporarily, depending on the seriousness of the delays and reasons.

MCC will base their approach to pick up points on the types of need of the children and young people with SEND who use their services, recognising that pick up points are not appropriate for all service users. Where pick-up points are used then MCC will spend time consulting with parents to ensure that changes are fully communicated and understood. MCC recognise that it is important to have clear approach in place around pick up points. The maximum distance a pupil would be expected to travel to a pick up point would be 0.5 miles whilst MCC will ensure that a full risk assessment is undertaken to ensure the safety of children / vehicle access.

- 5.2.6.3 **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. All vehicles will offer standards of comfort and safety as prescribed by relevant legislation. 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.

Availability of transport is not guaranteed. For example, a case may arise where a young person is non-ambulant, but has not been allocated a crash-tested buggy or wheelchair for use on transport. Transport crews are not permitted to lift pupils onto or off transport. Parents, carers and schools are also not permitted to lift pupils onto or off transport as a situation may arise (such as a mechanical fault to the vehicle) which may require the transport crews to lift the pupil during a journey. In these circumstances, parental mileage reimbursement may be given as an alternative.

Closed-circuit television (CCTV) with audio recording or global positioning systems (GPS) may be used on vehicles. The CCTV footage will not be shared or circulated with anyone outside the Council, but, along with GPS, can help to improve the speed and accuracy of incident resolution, and also supports transport crew training.

Passenger assistants will be provided on some transport routes. The provision or non- provision of a passenger assistant on a route is based on several factors, including:

- the age of the pupil
- the distance between home and school
- information provided on the transport assessment form
- the SEND of the pupil
- the number of other pupils travelling on this route

There is no minimum or maximum age that determines whether a passenger assistant will be automatically provided and the Council will consider age in conjunction with all the factors listed above to make its decision.

Provision of a passenger assistant at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement nor can the Council guarantee consistency of provision. The requirement will be re-assessed in the pupil's annual review, periodically during the year, and in the event of any change in circumstances.

Provision of vehicles may be cancelled at short notice in the case of a vehicle needing to be stood down due to unforeseen and unprecedented circumstances. If this is the case, parents will be contacted as soon as possible, and alternative arrangements will be discussed.

Part B

6 Application, Review and Appeals processes

6.1 Application Process

- 6.1.1 Parents and Carers are required to complete an application for home to school transport assistance. Once eligibility has been assessed and agreed, transport will be arranged 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 may be faster when a child is being added to an existing route with a space available. In some cases, this may take longer, for example where there is a need for a larger or specialist vehicle. This time allows the HTST sufficient time to assess each child's needs, obtain quotes for the transport provider, and ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place.
- 6.1.2 It remains the legal responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their compulsory school aged child attends school regularly.
- 6.1.3 In most cases, travel support to access education will be co-ordinated by the Council's Home to School Transport Team. 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.
- 6.1.4 The application form should be completed by Parents/Carers and can be found at: https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500132/special_educational_needs/1856/travel_assistance_for_pupils_with_special_educational_needs_and_disabilities_send/2 whilst advice and guidance to support the completion of this form can be provided by MCC by ringing the HTST contact number 0161 219 6400. Under exceptional circumstances, such as the Parent/Carer being unable to use an electronic device for whatever reason, and where pre-agreed with the Home to School Transport Team, a paper form may be completed and sent to:

Home to School Transport Team
Access & Sufficiency
Directorate for Children's Services
Manchester City Council
P.O. Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Email to: hometoschool@manchester.gov.uk

7.0 Review process

As stated previously in this policy, whenever possible, travel solutions will be reviewed alongside EHC plan annual reviews and at key transition points in a child or young

person's education in order to ensure the support offered continues to meet the needs of the child/young person.

8.0 Changes in circumstances

8.1 It is the parent's/carer's/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.

8.2 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 Council care

9.0 Health and Safety

9.1 Any pupil may experience behavioural difficulties. MCC will work with schools, parents, carers and transport providers to manage instances where a pupil exhibits extreme behaviour characteristics. Poor behaviour may affect the concentration of the driver, and the overall safety of the other pupils or passenger assistants, and in some cases alternative arrangements will need to be made. In consultation with the pupil's school, it may be necessary to issue periods of fixed or permanent exclusion from transport. Parents and carers will be responsible for transporting their own children during any period of exclusion from transport. Non-provision of transport during these periods does not mean that the Council is not fulfilling their statutory duties, merely that transport arrangements were made but, as a result of behavioural issues, had to be suspended or removed. Where an allegation of unacceptable behaviour is received (either from a parent, carer, school or transport provider), the pupil against whom the allegation has been made may be temporarily excluded from transport services whilst an investigation is completed. Written statements will be requested from the driver and any passenger assistant, the school, SEND Panel and other parents or carers may also be consulted

9.2 There is an expectation that the parent/carer and/or the child/young person signs, and/or verbally agreed to if they are unable to physically sign, a Code of Conduct and the parent to support the team with any reports of challenge behaviour.

9.3 Parents/carers will be expected to ensure their child's and young person's continued attendance at school when a travel solution is withdrawn.

9.4 Members of transport staff have received accredited emergency first-aid training. Although there is no statutory duty for transport staff to administer medication, they are expected to ensure the health and safety of all pupils in their care. First-aid training includes managing the symptoms of shock, dealing with an unconscious casualty,

cardiac arrest and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, choking and seizures. Every parent, as part of their application, is required to provide detailed information directly to the HTST about their child's SEND and medical needs. In the event of an emergency on board a vehicle, the procedure is for the passenger assistant or driver to seek guidance from medical professionals by calling 999 and asking for a paramedic crew to attend the scene. It is for parents or Carers to decide whether they wish for their child to travel on regular transport in these circumstances. Where it is assessed to be unsafe for a pupil with complex or acute medical needs to travel with only a passenger assistant, MCC will seek to secure a medically-trained professional, such as a nurse or carer, to accompany the pupil on the vehicle. A risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure the correct level of medical support can be arranged. Transport staff are responsible for the health and safety of pupils in their care, but do not administer medication. If Parents/Carers believe it is unsafe for their child to travel on transport without medication being administered, the School Travel Assistance team must be advised at the time of application or immediately if there is a change of circumstances. In cases where there are complex medical needs, the Council will seek to provide appropriate support. Where it is not possible to provide suitable support Parents/Carers may be required to accompany their child on transport or arrange appropriate support (e.g. parent, relative, carer etc at no cost to the Council).

10.0 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.

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. The parent/carer/young person can appeal against the travel solution offered, the child/young person's eligibility, and/or the safety of the route.

The Appeals Process has two stages:

10.1 Stage 1 – Appeal of the original decision

A senior officer in the service will consider the appeal. The Appeals Form is available from the Council's Customer Service Centre 0161 219 6400, by writing to:

Home to School Transport Team
Access & Sufficiency
Directorate for Children's Services
Manchester City Council
P.O. Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Email to: hometoschool@manchester.gov.uk

- 10.1.1 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 Education officers and professional bodies may be required. A decision and notification will be made within 20 working days from receipt of the appeals form.
- 10.1.2 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.
- 10.1.3 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 Stage 2.

10.2 Stage 2

- 10.2.1 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 by a minimum of two Reviewing Officers who are independent from the Home to School Transport Team. Parents will have the option to attend the appeal if requested.
- 10.2.2 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.
- 10.2.3 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.
- 10.2.4 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.

11.0 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

Telephone: 0161 234 3012

12.0 Local Government Ombudsmen

12.1 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.