

Home to School Travel Assistance Policy

**(children and young people without special
educational needs or disability)**

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1. Introduction

Barnet Council seeks to ensure that children and young people living in the borough can get to and from their schools and other places of learning, through sustainable means of travel that promote their health, safety and independence, with due regard for the local environment.

Most children and young people in Barnet are expected to make use of free or concessionary travel options, such as walking, cycling or public transport, with no additional travel assistance from the Local Authority. The responsibility for making suitable travel arrangements generally rests with the parent¹.

There are exceptional circumstances under which the Council will provide travel assistance to enable children and young people to access their educational settings. In these cases, the Council will endeavour to promote suitable options that are believed to be sustainable and make the most efficient use of public resources.

2. Scope of the policy

This policy has been formulated specifically for children and young people, who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or long-term disability.

Travel assistance for children with special educational needs and disability is covered under the Council's **SEND Home to School Travel Assistance Policy**; a link to the policy and further information can be found online at [Barnet Local Offer – Travelling to and from education](#)

3. Legal background and statutory duties

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) parents are legally responsible for ensuring their statutory school-aged² child attends school regularly. This includes making the necessary arrangements to enable their child to travel to and from school.

The Education Act 1996 (as amended) imposes a duty on local authorities to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to facilitate regular attendance at qualifying schools³ for eligible children⁴; such arrangements are to be provided free of charge (s.508B).

¹ Parent refers to a natural parent or carer with parental responsibility for the child

² A child becomes compulsory school age at the start of term following his/her fifth birthday up until the last day in June in his/her age-appropriate Year 11 cohort

³ A qualifying school is a community, foundation or voluntary school, pupil referral units, free school, academies, universities and university technology colleges

⁴ An eligible child is the child must be of compulsory school age (5–16) attending a qualifying school and fulfils one of the eligibility criteria

The entitlement for free travel for eligible children does not automatically require travel provision through the local authority. Accessibility of suitable travel arrangements that are already in place by other providers, mainly Transport for London (TfL), will be considered as part of the assessment to determine whether local authority assistance is necessary.

Assistance may be provided to children who are assessed as fulfilling one of the eligibility criteria set out in *Part 5* of the policy.

Local authorities also have the discretionary power to go beyond their statutory duties and make school travel arrangements for children who are not eligible under s.508B. This power can be applied to children and young people who may require travel assistance under extenuating circumstances. The Council may make a charge for provision of travel arrangements under this power (s.508C).

4. Free and concessionary public transport within London

Most children aged 5-16 will not be eligible for travel assistance from the Council. The expectation is that TfL's free and discounted travel will meet the need for travel assistance in almost all cases⁵.

4.1 Children aged 0 - 5 years

5 to 10-year-old children can travel free of charge on all TfL services with a Zip Oyster photocard

4.2 Children aged 11 - 15 years

11 to 15-year-old children can free travel free of charge on TfL buses and access discounted travel on London Underground and other transport services with a Zip Oyster photocard

4.3 Young people aged 16-19 years

All students living in Barnet and attending qualifying full-time education or training establishments will qualify for a 16+ Zip Oyster photocard, which entitles them to free travel on London buses and trams, and 50% off on DLR, London Overground, TfL rail and most National Rail services in London.

Further information on post-16 travel options can be found in *Part 9* of this policy and online at [Barnet Local Offer – Travelling to and from education](#)

Full details of TfL's free and concessionary travel can be found at [Transport for London \(TfL\) free and discounted](#)

⁵ This is based on current TfL arrangements; temporary or permanent changes may apply in the future

5. Eligibility criteria for Local Authority assistance

Children may be eligible for travel assistance from Barnet Council if they are of compulsory school age, reside within the borough and fall within one of the categories below:

5.1 Statutory walking distance eligibility

the school has been designated by the Council, and the home to school distance is further than the statutory walking distance⁶

the parent is unable to sustain the cost of travel to a preferred school⁷ that is further than the statutory distance and no suitable alternative arrangements can be made by the Council

1.2 Unsafe route eligibility

the nature of the route to the school is deemed as unsafe and the pupil cannot be expected to travel by foot

5.3 Extended rights eligibility

the pupil is from a low-income family⁸ entitled to free school meals or the parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit if

- the nearest suitable school is beyond 2 miles (child aged over 8 and under 11);
- the school is between 2 and 6 miles (child aged 11-16 and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools); or
- the school is between 2 and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (child aged 11-16)

5.4 Safeguarding issues, temporary health and mobility problems eligibility

children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of other health and safety issues. Eligibility for such children will be assessed on individual need.

⁶ Statutory walking distance is

- 2 miles from school for children aged eight years or under
- 3 miles from school for children aged eight years or over

⁷ A preferred school is one that was chosen by the parent

⁸ Pupil entitled to free school meals or parents in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit

5.5 Measurement of the route

The measurement of statutory walking distances is based on the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely. As such, these routes may include footpaths, bridleways and other pathways, as well as recognised roads.

The 6-mile and 15-mile upper limits will be measured along routes designed for suitable motorised vehicles.

6. Travel assistance options available to the Local Authority

Barnet Council will consider the child's individual needs and select the arrangement that is most suitable, and makes the most efficient use of resources, from the list of options below:

- direct payment to parent for reimbursement of the cost of travel fares by public transport, school minibus or private coach
- direct payment to parent for reimbursement of fuel costs, at the rate 0.45 pence per mile
- direct payment to parent for local cab hire
- a place on a shared minibus or taxi route arranged by the Council
- any other mode of travel which is believed to be suitable and cost-effective.

Parents who are in receipt of direct travel payments from the Council are **wholly responsible for ensuring the safety and safeguarding of their child** during travel to and from his/her place of learning.

Suitability of arrangements

Transport arrangements will be considered with due regard to the length of the journey. The expectation is that children will not be required to make several changes on public transport resulting in an unreasonably long journey time. The maximum length of journey each way is expected to be no more than 45 minutes for a child of primary school age and 75 minutes for secondary school age

7. Applications for travel assistance from the Local Authority

There is no automatic entitlement to travel support. Applicants must complete and submit an online application. The link to the online form can be found on the Council's [Free Travel to School](#) webpage.

7.1 Supporting evidence

Applicants must provide all the information requested, together with any evidence they wish to submit in support of their application, to avoid unnecessary delays in the assessment process. The Council may undertake appropriate checks to verify the information provided.

Requests for travel assistance on low income grounds must be accompanied with an up-to-date qualifying letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) or HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC), as applicable.

Requests for travel assistance on the grounds of health and mobility issues will require substantiating medical evidence, usually a letter from the child's medical consultant outlining the nature of the problem and the likely prognosis.

The information submitted will be assessed to determine whether the application meets the eligibility criteria for travel assistance or whether a discretionary award can be made on the grounds of extenuating circumstances.

7.2 Decisions

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application, normally within 15 days from the date the application.

Where a child is deemed to be eligible for travel assistance, the Council will consider the range of travel options listed in *Part 6* of this policy and identify the most suitable option. This will depend on the child's individual needs, the distance from home to school, existing public transport options, availability of Local Authority transport routes and the cost associated with each option.

The duration of travel assistance will vary depending on circumstances of each case. Parents may be asked to provide updated evidence from time to time, which will enable the Council to review the case and determine whether the child continues to meet the eligibility criteria.

Where entitlement to extended travel rights has been established, the parent will be required to submit a termly school attendance record. Applications will be reviewed on an annual basis.

7.3 Change in circumstances

Parents must notify the Council of any change in circumstances, at any time, that might affect eligibility for travel assistance or cost of travel. This includes moving home, a change in the school attendance schedule, long-term absence, a change in financial circumstances or if the child leaves the educational setting. Changes must be communicated in an email to admissions.team@barnet.gov.uk

If a pupil ceases to be eligible for travel assistance any change to provision will be considered in the context of the potential impact on the child. Disruption to a child's education will be avoided.

The Council reserves the right to reduce or cease travel assistance if it comes to light that child is no longer eligible, is persistently absent from school or engages in behaviour during travel on public or private transport that gives cause for concern.

8. Appeals and complaints

Parents who disagree with the Council's decision to their application for travel assistance have the right to appeal against the decision. Appeal requests should be sent by email to admissions.team@barnet.gov.uk

Parents may wish to challenge the Council's decision on

- the transport arrangements offered
- their child's eligibility
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances; and
- the safety of the route.

7.3 The appeal process

There are two stages to the appeal process:

Stage One – review by a senior council officer

Parents will be given 20 working days⁹ from receipt of the Council's decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision.

Within 20 days of the parent's appeal request, a senior officer will review the original decision, and provide the parent with a detailed written notification of the outcome and the option to escalate the appeal to the next stage of the appeals process.

Stage Two – review by the Barnet Transport Appeal Panel

Parents will be given 20 working days from receipt of the Council's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.

Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent's request, the Appeal Panel will consider representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case and provide the parent with a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days), setting out the nature of the decision reached, how the review was conducted, information from any other parties that were consulted as part of the process, what factors were considered, the rationale for the decision reached and information about the parent's right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

7.3 Complaints

The decision reached by Barnet Transport Appeal Panel is final. However, parents who remain dissatisfied may follow [Barnet Council's Complaints Procedure](#)

Alternatively, parents may complain to the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

⁹ Working days do not include weekends or public holidays

9. Post-16 travel and transport

Barnet Council will not provide travel assistance to post-16¹⁰ students or trainees. Full-time students aged 16 to 18 years are expected to travel to and from their learning providers using free or discounted public transport.

The Council's duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties / disabilities to participate in education and training is covered in Barnet's SEND Home to School Travel Assistance Policy

7.3 Free and discounted public transport

Free / discounted travel ¹¹	Age	Benefits
16+ Zip Oyster photocard offers	16 to 18	Free and discounted travel on all TfL transport services 50% off adult pay as you go fares on bus, Tube, DLR, London Overground, TfL Rail and most National Rail services in London Child rate 7 Day, Monthly or longer period Travelcard and Bus & Tram Pass
18+ Student Oyster photocard	18 and over	30% reduction on adult-rate Travelcards and Bus & Tram Pass season tickets
Apprentice Oyster Photocard	18 and over	30% reduction on adult-rate Travelcards and Bus & Tram Pass season tickets
Bus & Tram Discount photocard	18 and over	50% reduction on Adult pay as you go bus and tram fares 50% reduction on Adult 7 Day or monthly (up to six months) Bus & Tram Passes
Freedom Pass (Disabled)	N/A	Travel for free or discounts on a range of transport services across London

7.3 Other types of travel support

16-19 Bursary

The [16-19 bursary](#) is available from the education provider to help with education-related costs, including transport, for students aged 16 to 19 and:

- studying at a publicly funded school or college in England - not a university

¹⁰ Post-16 refers to 16 to 19-year-olds in education or training

¹¹ For terms and conditions visit <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel>

- on a training course, including unpaid work experience
- on a course started at age 16 to 18 and continuing aged 19 or over

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursary

i) Bursary for students in vulnerable groups

This bursary is worth up to £1,200, depending on the young person's circumstances.

ii) Discretionary bursary

This bursary is for students who need financial help but do not qualify for a bursary in vulnerable groups. The education or training provider decides on how much will be awarded and the types of costs that can be covered.

Care to Learn (C2L)

The [Care to Learn](#) scheme can help with [childcare costs](#) for young parents aged under 20 at the start of your course.

The scheme is available for [publicly-funded courses](#) in England. This includes courses in:

- schools
- sixth forms in schools
- sixth-form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under 19 Bus Only Ticket or those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19 – 25 card.

The Residential Support Scheme helps learners access education that is not available within reasonable travelling distance of their home. Further details on the Scheme can be obtained by visiting www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme

Learner Support (DLS)

DLS supports learners aged 19 and over on a further education course and facing financial hardship. Further information is available at: www.gov.uk/discretionary-learner-support

Dance and Drama Awards (DaDa)

DaDa can help with fees and living costs at one of 17 private dance and drama schools. Further information is available at: www.gov.uk/dance-drama-awards

This policy has been developed with full regard and in accordance with

The Department for Education Guidance on Home to School Travel and Transport 2014
www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance

The Department for Education Guidance on Post-16 Transport to Education and Training
2019
www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-transport-to-education-and-training

The Education Act 1996
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents