

## HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY

### **For students without statements of special educational needs**

In accordance with the Education Act, as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, a London Borough of Richmond upon Thames resident child will be entitled to a grant for home to school travel if he or she:

1. Is in Year 11 or below; **and**
2. He or she attends a school which is the nearest suitable school/academy of its type (i.e. non-faith or of a particular faith or denomination) at which a place is available. (Please note, however, that this criterion does not need to be fulfilled if the resident's family has just moved to the Borough and s/he is in Year 10 or 11); **and**
3. The walking distance between home and school, measured by the shortest route by road and publicly-maintained footpaths, accompanied as necessary\*, is more than three miles (or two miles if aged seven or less); **and**
4. The school cannot be reached within a timetabled journey of less than one hour by buses on which the Transport for London free travel concessions for under-16 year-olds applies throughout the whole bus journey(s).

A London Borough of Richmond upon Thames resident child who is receiving free school meals or whose family is receiving the maximum amount of Working Tax Credit will be entitled to a grant for home to school travel in the following circumstances:

#### Primary school

1. He or she attends a school which is the nearest suitable school of its type (i.e. non-faith or of a particular faith or denomination) at which a place is available; **and**
2. The walking distance between home and school, measured by the shortest route by road and publicly-maintained footpaths, accompanied as necessary\*, is more than two miles; **and**
3. The school cannot be reached within a timetabled journey of less than one hour by buses on which the Transport for London free travel concessions for under-16 year-olds applies throughout the whole bus journey(s).

#### Secondary school

1. He or she attends a school which is one of the three nearest suitable schools of its type (i.e. non-faith or of a particular faith or denomination) at which a place is available; **and**
2. The walking distance between home and school, measured by the shortest route by road and publicly-maintained footpaths, accompanied as necessary\*, is between two miles and six miles for non-faith schools or between two miles and fifteen miles for faith schools; **and**
3. The school cannot be reached within a timetabled journey of less than one hour by buses on which the Transport for London free travel concessions for under-16 year-olds applies throughout the whole bus journey(s).

\* 'Accompanied as necessary'. The distance measured does not take account of the mode of transport used, nor does it indicate that the route is necessarily considered 'safe' for children who are unaccompanied by an adult.

### Notes

- If a resident attends a school which is **not the nearest suitable school of its type, but the nearest such school with a place available is also more than three miles (or two miles if aged seven or less) from home**, then a grant will be given to the value of travel costs to either the school attended or to the nearest school, whichever is cheaper.
- If a resident attends a school which is **not the nearest suitable school of its type, but a place could not be obtained at any nearer school of that type**, a grant for travel to the school attended will only be given if evidence can be provided that each nearer school of that type was unable to offer a place. However, that evidence would not have to be provided for a subsequent child admitted to the particular under the 'sibling' rule – in such a case, travel grant will be paid on the same basis as for the elder child.
- '**Nearest suitable school**' means either a non-faith school/academy of any type or a school of the particular faith/denomination of the child. Parental preference for a selective or partially-selective specialist school will not make a child eligible for funding unless there are no other non-faith schools – of any type, i.e. comprehensive, selective or partially-selective – nearer to home.
- Similarly, a resident attending the nearest **single-sex school** will not be eligible for a travel grant if a place is available at a mixed-sex school nearer to home (except in circumstances where the school attended is of the resident's particular religion or denomination and the nearer school is either a community school or of a different religion or denomination to that of the resident).
- A resident whose family is **temporarily re-housed** in a home which meets the minimum distance criteria (outlined above) from school will be eligible for a travel-grant if proof is provided of the temporary housing placement. The grant will be subject to termly review of the family's housing situation.

### **Temporary mobility difficulties**

The Authority will provide travel assistance to a pupil who has **temporary mobility difficulties**, e.g. a broken leg, if he or she: -

- Is in year 11 or below; **and**
- Is a permanent resident of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames; **and**
- Medical evidence of the temporary mobility is provided; **and**
- S/he could not otherwise attend school.

### **Discretion**

The Authority has the discretion to provide financial assistance for home to school travel in exceptional circumstances, which may be social, medical, financial, or other, but which fall outside the eligibility criteria of the policy. Circumstances which could fall within this category include sudden financial downturn, relocation due to domestic violence, and change of school following exclusion; however this list is not exhaustive. If you feel that you have any such circumstances, you should provide full details on your application form and provide any relevant documents that can support your case.

Applications that outline exceptional circumstances will be considered on their own merits by a senior officer of the Authority. Successful applicants at this stage will be awarded grants at values to be determined by the senior officer. Applicants who are refused at this stage will be given the right of appeal to the Appeals Sub-Committee (see 'Appeals' below).

## **Appeals**

Applicants who do not meet the Policy criteria, and whose circumstances are not deemed to justify the awarding of support at the 'Discretion' stage (again, please refer to the travel policy for full details), have a right of appeal against the Local Authority's decision not to award assistance with home to school mainstream travel arrangements. Please be aware that appeals are now dealt with through the Appeals Sub-Committee, which consists of three Councillors or Council Officers of the Regulatory Committee.

## For students with statements of special educational needs

A statement of special educational needs (SEN) may include the need for travel assistance and the Local Authority (LA)'s SEN Panel will decide if travel assistance will be included in the statement. That assistance will, like the statement as a whole, be subject to annual review.

In accordance with the Education Act, as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, a London Borough of Richmond upon Thames resident child with a statement of SEN will be entitled to a grant for home to school travel if he or she:

1. Is in Year 11 or below; **and**
2. He or she attends a school which is the nearest suitable school of its type (i.e. community or of a particular faith or denomination) at which a place is available. (Please note, however, that this criterion does not need to be fulfilled if the resident's family has just moved to the Borough and s/he is in Year 10 or 11); **and**
3. The walking distance between home and school, measured by the shortest route by road and publicly-maintained footpaths, accompanied as necessary\*, is more than three miles (or two miles if aged seven or less); **and**
4. The school cannot be reached within a timetabled journey of less than one hour by buses on which the Transport for London free travel concessions for under-16 year-olds applies throughout the whole bus journey(s).

A London Borough of Richmond upon Thames resident child with a statement of SEN who is receiving free school meals or whose family is receiving the maximum amount of Working Tax Credit will be entitled to a grant for home to school travel in the following circumstances:

### Primary school

1. He or she attends a school which is the nearest suitable school of its type (i.e. community or of a particular faith or denomination) at which a place is available; **and**
2. The walking distance between home and school, measured by the shortest route by road and publicly-maintained footpaths, accompanied as necessary\*, is more than two miles; **and**
3. The school cannot be reached within a timetabled journey of less than one hour by buses on which the Transport for London free travel concessions for under-16 year-olds applies throughout the whole bus journey(s).

### Secondary school

1. He or she attends a school which is one of the three nearest suitable schools of its type (i.e. community or of a particular faith or denomination) at which a place is available; **and**
2. The walking distance between home and school, measured by the shortest route by road and publicly-maintained footpaths, accompanied as necessary\*, is between two miles and six miles for non-faith schools or between two miles and fifteen miles for faith schools; **and**
3. The school cannot be reached within a timetabled journey of less than one hour by buses on which the Transport for London free travel concessions for under-16 year-olds applies throughout the whole bus journey(s).

## Notes

- Where, as a result of parental preference, a child is placed in a school that is further away from the child's home than another appropriate school proposed by the LA, the parents will be responsible for meeting the transport costs.
- Travel assistance will be given to pupils who travel by public transport, through the use – where possible – of travel passes, except where their needs are so complex and significant that it would compromise their health or well-being to travel on public transport, or where the journey is so complex that the pupil could not be expected to undertake it without losing educational benefit.
- When the LA supports the cost of such transport, consideration will always be given in the first instance to providing financial assistance to the parents in transporting their child to and from school by refunding petrol costs.

### **Travel assistance for students with special educational needs who attend residential schools**

- Travel assistance will be provided for twelve journeys per year; at the beginning and end of each half-term and term.
- Shared arrangements will be made with other LAs whenever possible in order to use public resources efficiently.
- When a residential school provides transport to a Central London pick-up point it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child is picked up from this point.

### **The role of parents of students with special educational needs**

- If it is necessary for the LA to provide transport, and for the child to be accompanied, parents will be expected to accompany their child to school wherever practicable.
- Where the transport is shared with other children, parents may wish to make joint arrangements.
- If it is impossible for parents to accompany their children, an escort will be provided (see below). An escort will always be provided on the buses to Clarendon School, Oldfield House unit and Strathmore School.

### **The role of escorts for students with special educational needs**

- Escorts will be provided on minibuses taking children to special schools and where it is impossible for parents to accompany their children, in accordance with decisions made by the SEN Panel.
- The role of escorts is to support the safety and well-being of passengers with special educational needs.
- The escorts will be recruited and trained by Environmental and Operational Services.
- All escorts will be screened by the Metropolitan Police for past criminal convictions.

## **Discretion**

The Authority has the discretion to provide financial assistance for home to school travel in exceptional circumstances, which may be social, medical, financial, or other, but which fall outside the eligibility criteria of the policy. Circumstances which could fall within this category include sudden financial downturn, relocation due to domestic violence, and change of school following exclusion; however this list is not exhaustive. If you feel that you have any such circumstances, you should provide full details on your application form and provide any relevant documents that can support your case.

Applications that outline exceptional circumstances will be considered on their own merits by a senior officer of the Authority. Successful applicants at this stage will be awarded grants at values to be determined by the senior officer. Applicants who are refused at this stage will be given the right of appeal to the Pupil and Student Support Appeals Panel (see 'Appeals' below).

## **Appeals**

Applicants who do not meet the Policy criteria, and whose circumstances are not deemed to justify the awarding of support at the 'Discretion' stage (again, please refer to the travel policy for full details), have a right of appeal against the Local Authority's decision not to award assistance with home to school mainstream travel arrangements. Please be aware that appeals are now dealt with through the Appeals Sub-Committee, which consists of three Councillors or Council Officers of the Regulatory Committee. The Local Authority is in the process of updating its home to school transport policy and the appeals section is an area under review.