

Home to School Travel Assistance

A guide to travel assistance for children and young people in Waltham Forest including those with special education needs and/or disabilities.





Welcome

This guide provides information and advice to parents* about the services available in supporting their child(ren) in traveling to and from school, college and further education settings.

Waltham Forest is strongly committed to safe and inclusive travel for all children and young people to and from school[^]. The majority of young people wish to become more independent with regard to travel. Supporting young people in travelling to and from school is an important aspect of their social inclusion and, in the longer term, vital for attaining maximum independence and making life choices.

Waltham Forest's home to school transport policy ensures that travel assistance meets the individual needs and circumstances of every young learner. A range of options for support with travel in Waltham Forest are available for children and young people in full-time education and living in Waltham Forest.

* Where the word 'parents' appears in document – we refer to parents or carers of young people.

[^] Where the word 'school' appears in the document – we refer to schools, colleges and educational settings.



Contents

What is home to school travel assistance	4
Who is entitled to home to school transport assistance	4
What free travel in London is available to under 18s?	5
What journeys are eligible for travel assistance?	6
What are the statutory walking distances?	6
What support exists for low-income families?	7
What support exists for disabled parents?	7
What support exists for children aged under 16 with special education needs?	8
What support exists for children with medical needs?	9
What support exists for children in care?	9
How do I apply?	10
What if I disagree with a decision?	10
Contacts	11



What is home to school travel assistance?

Waltham Forest has a statutory duty to provide home to school travel assistance. There will be some children and young people who will need transport assistance due to the distance they live from the nearest educational setting, their age, special educational needs and/or disability.

It is anticipated that for most children and young people, the free travel provision offered by Transport for London (see page 4) will enable them to access the school of their choice. For those parents who believe that this option is not appropriate for their child, they may apply for additional travel support from the local authority, under the terms of Waltham Forest's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy.



Who is entitled to home to school transport assistance?

Travel assistance applies to all children and young people in Waltham Forest who:

- are of compulsory school age or below
- aged 16 – 19 and in full-time education
- aged 19 and over in continuous learning (the course starting before their 19th birthday).
- are resident in Waltham Forest and receiving education or training within the authority, or in the area of another authority.
- Live more than the statutory walking distance between their home and educational setting (see page 5)
- Attend the nearest educational setting as determined by the Local Authority

The following general guidelines apply to applications:

- If parents choose to send their child to a school other than the nearest appropriate school (as determined by the local authority), then parents must take full responsibility for the cost and arrangements of their child's travel to and from school.



- The offer of a place at a particular school does not in any way guarantee support with travel costs or arrangements.
- The legal responsibility for ensuring a child's attendance at school rests with the parents.
- Transport may be withdrawn if the child's behaviour threatens the safety of other children or escort or driver. It may also be withdrawn if the parent is consistently late meeting the bus. This applies to journeys to and from school/ educational setting.

What free travel in London is available to under 18s?

Transport for London provides free or discounted travel for young people in London under the ZIP Oyster scheme. All under 16s can travel free on buses and trams and at a child-rate on Tube, DLR and London Overground services, if they have an Oyster photocard.

Under 5s

Children under five can travel free at any time on buses, Tube, trams, DLR, and London Overground services as long as they are accompanied by someone who has a valid ticket, is using Oyster to pay as they go or has a Freedom Pass.

5 to 10 year olds

Children aged 5 to 10 years can travel free at any time on buses, Tube, trams, DLR and London Overground services at any time.

On buses and trams:

- Accompanied 5 to 10-year-olds can travel free at any time. They do not need a ticket or photocard to do so on Tube, DLR and London Overground services:
- A maximum of four 5 to 10-year-olds can travel free when accompanied by an adult who has a valid ticket, is using Oyster to pay as they go or has a Freedom Pass
- If they are travelling unaccompanied, 5 to 10-year-olds will need a 5-10 Oyster photocard to travel free at any time.

11 to 15 year olds

Children aged 11 to 15 years can get an 11-15 Oyster photocard to travel free on buses and trams and at child-rate on Tube, DLR and London Overground services.

16+

All 16 to 17-year-olds can travel at child-rate on bus, Tube, tram, DLR and London Overground services with a 16+ Oyster photocard.



Those 16 to 18-year-olds who live in a London borough and are still in qualifying full-time education can also apply to get free travel on buses and trams.

To find out more about free and concessionary travel for school children and students visit the Transport for London website www.tfl.gov.uk or your nearest station.

What journeys are eligible for travel assistance?

Assistance relates to journeys to and from schools at the start and

end of the day. Journeys may be to, from or between schools (including independent schools), further education institutions and other institutions where education or training might be delivered.

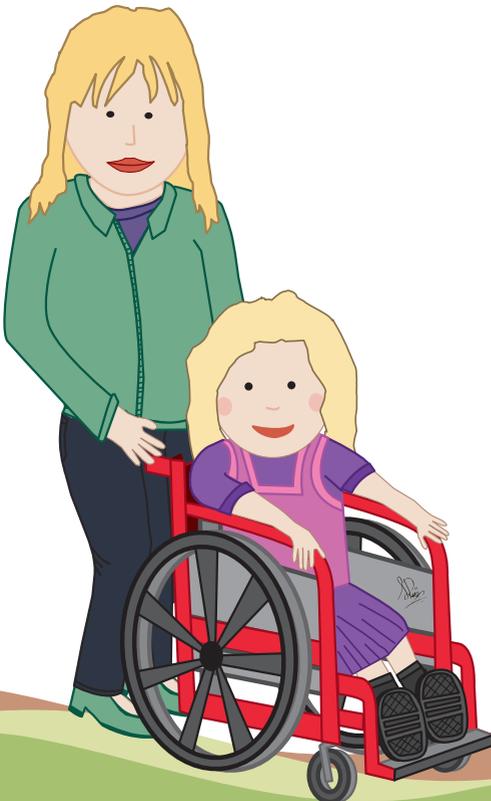
Does the distance that my child lives from their school affect our entitlement?

Yes. The walking distance between the child's home address and education setting, combined with their age, affects your entitlement to travel assistance. This is known as the 'statutory walking distances'.

What are the statutory walking distances?

Children under 8 years of age:

Children under 8 years old and living more than two miles walking distance to their school are entitled to travel support.



Children over 8 years of age:

Children over 8 years old and living more than three miles walking distance to their school are entitled to travel support.

If your child's walk to school is less than these statutory walking distances the responsibility for the journey from home to school and back rests with you as the parent / carer. The statutory walking distance is measured along a route that a child might reasonably be expected to walk to school.

What support exists for low-income families?

Low income families are entitled to support with travel if:

- you are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC) or you receive free school meals
- your child is of the statutory school age
- your child lives more than two miles (under 8) and 3 miles (8 and over) from their nearest appropriate school with places available in their relevant year group.



Support with travel for children from low income families (defined as above) will be offered in one of two ways:

- to a school within 6 miles (but greater than 2 miles) of the child's home; and
- to the nearest school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief up to a maximum of 15 miles from the child's home.

A child's 'home' is the place where s/he is normally resident.

Once eligibility on income grounds has been confirmed, this is established for the entirety of the school year for which the assessment has been made.

What support exists for disabled parents?

Where a parent's disability prevents them from accompanying their child/ren along a walking route to school, the local authority may provide free travel support for the children even within the statutory walking distance. However, if parents are in receipt of transport assistance as part of their disability living allowance they will not receive this support.

What support exists for children aged under 16 with special education needs?

If your child is under 16 and has a statement of special education needs (SEN), you may be entitled to transport support following an assessment. The local authority will take into account the following needs when considering the provision of transport support for pupils with special education needs:

- the child has complex physical/medical difficulties;
- the child has severe learning difficulties;
- the child has severe communication difficulties;
- the child has emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- safety issues and how the child's independence relates to the above.

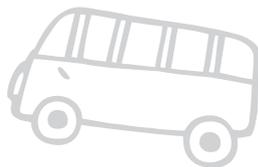
Where local authority transport is deemed to be the appropriate option, then an individual assessment of the journey will be carried out based on information supplied by the local authority, school and parents.

What support exists for young people aged over 16 years with special educational and other needs?

Support may be available to young people aged between 19 and 21 in continuous education whose programme / course started before their 19th birthday. Travel support is available to young people resident in Waltham Forest to enable or support them in attending sixth form, college or further education colleges within or outside the borough.

A young person is entitled to apply for travel support if all the following conditions are met:

- he/she is aged 16 but under 19 at the start of the academic year in which the course begins;
- he/she is attending college on a full-time basis;
- he/she is attending the nearest appropriate school or college, having taken account of the young person's needs, chosen course of study and any preference on grounds of faith;



- the distance from home to the place of study is more than 3 miles;
- he/she or their family are in receipt of the following benefits:
 - Income Support or
 - Jobseeker's Allowance (income-based)
 - Child Tax Credit but NOT also Working Tax Credit and have annual taxable income of less than £14,455
 - Working Tax Credit
 - Financial support under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) or the local authority's Asylum Resettlement Team.
- the young person has previously had a statement of Special Education Needs, and the need for travel support post 16 is explicit in their Transition Plan.

Applications for young people aged 16+ should be fully discussed when planning their transition at their Year 9, 10 and 11 annual reviews and must include the views of the young person. Applications should be made to the SEN Team as early as possible. Contact **Rhian Hughes 020 8496 6511** for details.

What support exists for children with medical needs?

Travel support may be granted for children and young people where there is written evidence from an appropriate medical practitioner. Support even applies if your child lives within the statutory walking distance. Assistance will be reviewed at regular intervals.

What support exists for children in care?

Travel support may be available for children in care to ensure that they have appropriate home to school travel arrangements. When a child enters care or moves placement in an unplanned way every effort should be made to enable the child to remain at their current school unless this is impossible. This may require specific arrangements to be made for the travel between the care placement and the school. Arrangements will be reviewed regularly, at each Child Care review.



How do I apply?

Parents or carers who believe that their child may be entitled to travel support should obtain and complete a 'School Travel Support' application form.

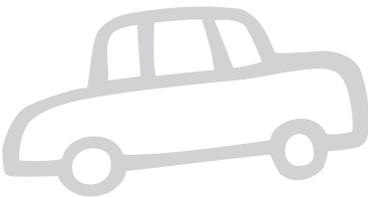
For an application form contact:

Transport Officer
SEN Team
Wood Street Health Centre
6 Linford Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 3LA

Tel 020 8496 6500
Email manoj.karavadra@walthamforest.gov.uk

Notification of Decision

All applications will receive careful consideration and parents will be informed of the local authority's decision in writing within ten working days of the receipt of the application.



What if I disagree with a decision?

Where an application for school travel support has been refused and parents wish for further consideration of their particular circumstances, an appeal may be made for the decision to be reviewed.

Application forms for an appeal can be obtained from and should be returned to:

Transport Officer
SEN Team
Wood Street Health Centre
6 Linford Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 3LA

Tel 020 8496 6500
Email manoj.Karavadra@walthamforest.gov.uk

When requesting a review it is important for parents to supply as much evidence as possible in support of their request. For example, it may be helpful for the appeal panel to have information about family circumstances, details of how the child currently travels to school and any concerns arising from that, whether a responsible adult is able to accompany the child to and from school etc. All evidence supplied will be taken into account by the review panel.



How do I make a formal appeal against a decision?

If the review upholds the decision to refuse the application for support and parents still believe that their circumstances warrant special consideration, they are entitled to make an appeal. **This must be made in writing** to the above address.

An appeal must be made within four weeks of the review decision; otherwise the local authority's decision will stand.

Complaints

All complaints will be dealt with using Waltham Forest's staged approach. You can complain directly to The Special Education Needs Team at the above address or by contacting:

**Children and Young People Services
Unit 7
Silver Birch House
Uplands Business Park
Blackhorse Lane
Walthamstow
London
E17 5SD**

**Tel 020 8496 3000
Email councilcomplaints@walthamforest.gov.uk**

Contact

For any enquires contact Waltham Forest's Special Education Needs (SEN) team on:

**Transport Officer
SEN Team
Wood Street Health Centre
6 Linford Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 3LA**

**Tel 020 8496 6500
Email manoj.Karavadra@walthamforest.gov.uk**



