Department for Children & Young People

Travel assistance between home and school or college for pupils and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability

1 June 2024

Bury COUNCIL

HOME TO SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, DISABILITIES OR MOBILITY DIFFICULTIES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy outlines the travel support available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility difficulties living within the boundaries of Bury Council to access education.

1.2 The policy is based on statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education.

The Council has a statutory duty to make necessary travel arrangements for eligible children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and must have a policy setting out how it will meet this duty. The current policy was last subject to review in 2015.

The DfE has recently published updated guidance in respect of travel assistance, and it is timely therefore that Bury reviews its policy to reflect this guidance.

Working with Bury2gether, a series of engagement sessions have been held with parents and carers during January 2024 to understand the barriers families may be facing with the existing home to school transport policy and to consider how we can better support young people and their families. The department has received valuable feedback that has been taken into consideration when co-producing this new proposed policy with Bury2gether.

This proposed policy responds to the feedback received and outlines the travel support available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility difficulties living within the boundaries of Bury Council to access education.

1.3 The aim of the Council's travel assistance policy is to ensure that all children and young people should lead lives that are independent and as free from restriction as possible, thereby contributing to the vision, purpose and values of Bury Council.

Our Vision and Strategy

1.4 The provision of travel assistance by the Council will be based on individual needs and circumstances and have regard to the efficient and effective use of resources.

SUB HEADING

1.5 This policy is set out in four sections as follows:

SECTION A

- Pre-School children – (age 3-4) attending Hoyle Nursery, or a mainstream or special school with an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Children of compulsory school age (5-16) attending a mainstream or special school with an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Children of compulsory school age (5-16) attending a mainstream school or specialist unit within a mainstream school who have special educational needs, a disability or mobility difficulties, but who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

SECTION B

- Young people aged 16 to 25 years with special educational needs and disabilities – students of sixth form age (16-18) and adult learners (aged 19-25)

SECTION C

- The legal background to home to school travel, definition of terms used in this policy, coverage and service standards.

SECTION D

- Appeals procedure.

1.6 Wherever possible, in the provision of travel assistance, the Council will consider travel options that lead to reducing the number and length of vehicle journeys.

1.7 This policy explains:

- Who is eligible for assistance with travel assistance from Bury Council.
- The legal basis for the provision of travel assistance by local authorities.
- What kind of travel assistance may be provided.
- How assistance with travel is assessed, and how parents/carers can appeal against decisions made by the Council.
- The Council's transport service standards.

1.8 This proposed policy forms part of the Council's overall Home to School and College travel policy and has been updated to reflect new statutory guidance[1].

SECTION A

2. This policy relates to travel assistance for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability assessed as requiring travel assistance or transport, which will usually mean those with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. It may also apply to those who are undergoing assessment for an EHC plan or have been placed by the Authority in a school to meet their SEND that is not their local school. Travel assistance will be determined by reference to the individual child's needs.

2.1 Travel assistance may be provided for Pre-School children – (age 3-4) attending Hoyle Nursery, or a mainstream or special school with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

2.2 Travel assistance may be provided for children of compulsory school age (5-16 years) who, because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility difficulties, cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school[2].

2.3 Where it is not possible for a pupil to attend a school near to their home because the school is unable to meet their additional needs, travel assistance will be provided. A suitable school is the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child considering any special educational needs the child may have.

[1] Post 16, transport and travel support to education and training, January 2024
[2] Paragraph 30, Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, January 2024.

2.4 It is not necessary for a child to have an EHC plan to qualify for travel assistance under this policy, but where an assessment is being undertaken for an EHCP, in parallel, an assessment will be undertaken to determine eligibility for travel assistance or transport.

'Transport provision' is rarely included in an EHC plan, as it is not a form of educational provision, and the majority of children with EHC plans do not need or receive specialised travel assistance from the Council. However, where a requirement for travel assistance is identified, it will be confirmed when the EHCP is issued.

For those children and young people without an EHCP or those requesting travel assistance outside of the initial EHC process, a separate application must be made, and this will be assessed taking into account the individual needs.

2.5 Not every child/young person with an EHC plan or who attends a special school will be eligible for free travel to school.

2.6 The Council will assess eligibility on the grounds of special educational needs, disability, or mobility problems on a case-by-case basis. The assessment will take into account the child's physical ability to walk to school and any health and safety issues relating to their special educational needs, disability, or mobility problems. Where reasonable, it will also take into account whether they would be able to walk to school in reasonable safety if they were accompanied by a parent/carer[3].

3. Other factors that may be taken into consideration when assessing a child or young person's eligibility for assistance with travel.

3.1 Where the parent/carer of the child or young person has a disability, the local authority is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments if the usual application of this travel assistance policy places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

3.2 Where parents/carers receive the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments from June 2013) on behalf of the child, and/or a car is provided for them under the Motability Scheme, parents of children of compulsory school age may be asked if they are willing to use this car to provide transport to school for their child. If they agree, they will be given a Personal Travel budget or mileage reimbursement to enable them to transport their child. Payments in lieu of arranged transport will only be made with the consent of a parent. Being in receipt of additional benefits or allowances such as Disability Living Allowance, a Motability vehicle or Foster Care Allowance does not affect a child's eligibility for free home to school travel.

3.3 When assessing the need for transport the child's needs and family context will be taken into account. In accordance with DfE guidance[4] personal circumstances such as parents/ carers attending work, taking other children into other schools, or looking after other children will not be taken into account, unless there is a sibling or another child within the household with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, or where there are other specific extenuating family circumstances.

3.4 Parental preference for a school named in section I of a EHC plan, where the local authority considers that there is a suitable school nearer to the child or

[3] Paragraph 49, Home to School Travel Guidance, January 2024
[4] Paragraph 52, Home to School Travel Guidance, January 2024

young person's home then the local authority may name that school in the EHC plan. In such cases the Council may require parents to accept responsibility for all travel arrangements to their preferred school and associated costs. However, if the difference in cost between the parents' choice and the nearer suitable school is not significantly more expensive, then the Council will support travel to the parents' preferred school.

3.5 In line with DfE guidance[5] the Council must make arrangements to enable a child to travel to school for the beginning of the school day, and to return home at the end of the school day. The Council are not required to make arrangements for:

- Children or young people taken ill during the day.
- any type of appointments including medical or any other specialists.
- Children or young people who have been excluded during the school day.
- Breakfast or after school clubs.
- A pickup from or return to any address other than the child/young person's home address or designated pick up / drop off point.
- For children or young people to travel between institutions during the school day.

The Council may work with parents/carers to accommodate changes where possible while having regard to the constraints of operational delivery and efficient use of its resources. This may include where children or young people attend school on a reduced timetable or regular attendance at after school clubs.

Where a child/young person attends after school club on a regular basis on a specified day parents/carers may receive a reimbursement of mileage on the day(s) the child/young person does not access transport.

The Council's policy on the provision of travel assistance for additional journeys is described in more detail at Section C.

3.6 The Council will exercise its discretion in the award of travel assistance where the child is below compulsory school age. These are:

1) Pre-school children – Where a 3 to 4 year old has been assessed as requiring an EHCP with specialist provision being named on the plan.
2) Reception children – Where a 4 year old is attending a reception class in an infant or primary qualifying school and their 5th birthday occurs during the year in which they start school.

The parent/carer must submit evidence to demonstrate why the child is unable to walk to school and why they are unable to accompany them or take them to school.

4. What assistance with travel may be offered

4.1 Once a child's eligibility for travel has been agreed, the Council will offer the most appropriate type of travel arrangement. This decision will be based on the identified needs of the individual child or young person and the family context and will take account of the Council's duties to make the best use of its

[5] Paragraph 64 Home to School Travel Guidance, January 2024

resources. It should be noted that the mode of travel assistance offered will be reviewed at least annually and may change as the needs of the child or young person change, whilst continuing to ensure the best use of the Council's resources.

Travel assistance will be reviewed as part of the child or young person's EHCP annual review. For those children and young people in receipt of travel assistance without an EHCP contact will be made by the School and College Transport Team.

4.2 For children attending school on a daily basis, travel assistance will usually only be provided for the beginning and end of the school day. Where there are changes to the school day, e.g. opening at a later time or closing earlier due to building issues, or finishing earlier at the end of term, wherever possible the Council may consider a change to transport provision while having regard to the constraints of operational delivery and efficient use of its resources.

Transport will not usually be provided or adjusted for children to attend breakfast clubs/after school clubs however, an alternative form of travel assistance may be offered where there is regular attendance at breakfast clubs/after school clubs.

4.3 Travel assistance is also provided where pupils are registered at more than one school setting (dual placements) so long as the child / young person meets the eligibility criteria.

4.4 A child boarding on a weekly basis where the school is closed at weekends will be provided with travel assistance at the beginning and end of the school week, other periods of closure and during term time only. A child boarding on a termly placement where the school is not closed at weekends will be provided with travel assistance limited to the start and end of the school term, half terms and for periods of whole school closure only. Any other journeys required will be the responsibility of parents/carers including attendance at annual reviews, additional home visits at weekends or any other time.

4.5 The Council's policy on the provision of travel assistance for additional journeys in various circumstances is explained in Section C.

5. The Travel Offer

5.1 The Council will always consider forms of travel assistance that helps to develop travel independence skills to enable children and young people to lead independent lives as they grow older.

5.2 The options that will be considered when assessing the travel assistance that will be provided will include, but are not limited to:

Mileage rate: The council will re-imburse parents a mileage rate if they choose to transport their child/young person to school in their own vehicle. Mileage is calculated based on the Council's ICT database measurement tool and will be paid for a maximum of two return journeys per day.

Personal Travel Budget (PTB): It may be possible for the Council to provide parents/carers with an amount of money to enable them to provide personalised travel arrangements that best and most flexibly suit the needs of their child and family. The sum provided will be at the discretion of the Council; it will be based on the distance travelled from home to school, and will not exceed the cost of direct provision of transport by the Council, or a share of

that cost where the child would otherwise travel with other children in a shared vehicle. It is parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that travel arrangements made by them are safe and accessible and that school attendance is maintained. A PTB can be refused or withdrawn if these conditions are not met. Personal travel budgets consider the route from parents/carers home address to school and the distance is measured using the Council's transport software, the personal budget is then based on the mileage for two return journeys per day. The travel allowance for a personal travel budget is contained at Appendix A and published on the Council's website www.bury.gov.uk.

A personal travel budget must be used to facilitate the child/young person attending school; however, it can be used in a variety of ways such as:

- support the cost of driving your child/young person to and from school (purchase of fuel).
- arrangements with a friend or relative to take your child/young person to school.
- arrangements with a friend or relative to act as a PA for your child/young person in a family members vehicle or their own.
- arrangements to book an individual taxi.
- arrangements to car share or book a joint taxi with other parents where their children are attending the same school.
- support arrangements where a child/young person is attending school on a reduced timetable.
- purchase of travel passes for other children so they can travel to school whilst parents transport the young person in receipt of the personal travel budget.
- purchase a place at before and after school club for the child/young person in receipt of personal budget.
- purchase of a place at before and after school club for other children to allow parents/carers to transport the young person in receipt of the personal travel budget.

Transport vehicles: Where assessed as essential, the Council may provide a vehicle to transport a child or young person to and from school. Where transport vehicles are provided, these will be either Council vehicles and drivers or those provided by a suitably qualified and licensed commercial provider working to contractual standards set by the Council.

Whenever possible, children will travel together in shared vehicles. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those travelling on them. Each route will be planned on the basis of school start and finish times and the shortest possible route for all children travelling on a particular vehicle. Under very exceptional circumstances the Council may transport pupils in separate taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the child or young person. Arrangements of this kind will be kept under regular review and, where possible, the opportunity will be taken to move to an alternative suitable form of travel assistance.

For primary/nursery age children a home pickup and drop off will be made.

Communal pick up/drop off points may be considered for secondary school children within a reasonable distance from their home address. Where this option is considered an element of independent travel training may be required

to support the child/young person travelling safely to the meeting point. A home pickup and drop off will be made where it is deemed essential to the child or young person's special educational needs or disabilities.

Independent travel training: independent travel training may be considered for secondary school age children and young people.

Independent travel training can enhance the young person's confidence and independence by developing personal, social and life skills. It focuses on the needs and capabilities of the pupil and is delivered through working closely with parents/carers and school staff. Independent travel training will also develop young people's personal safety awareness and road safety skills when using public transport. Criteria for successful completion of the training will be based on an agreed comprehensive training programme and a copy of the final assessment will be provided to parents/carers. Successful completion of Independent Travel Training will be signed-off by the Council and parents/carers.

Top up training will be available to support young people with transition when moving to a new school and on social routes during school holidays. Social routes may include travel to family houses, places of interest and social events such as youth groups.

All applications for travel assistance will be reviewed to determine if an assessment for independent travel training should take place. If an assessment for travel training is deemed appropriate a further assessment will be undertaken by a qualified Travel Trainer and involves contributions from the young person and their parents, school staff and other professionals.

Independent travel training may be considered for all young people that are:

- Transferring from a mainstream school to a special school.
- Attend a mainstream school or specialist unit within a mainstream setting.
- Attending a pupil referral unit.
- Attending a post 16 provision.
- Referred by parent or educational establishment at their annual review.

Travel pass: To enable the child/young person to travel to school accompanied, if necessary, by an adult via public transport solutions. This is for use on public transport or trams between home and school only throughout the academic year. A personal travel budget or travel pass may also be provided to a parent or travel buddy to accompany the child or young person on the journeys if necessary. An element of Independent Travel Training will be provided for this option if required.

6. Vehicle transport service standards and provision of passenger assistants

6.1 The vehicle transport service provided by the Council for children and young people will operate to the service standards described at Section C.

6.2 In some circumstances where the Council has assessed that there is a need, a Passenger Assistant may be provided to accompany pupils to school on transport provided by the Council. Passenger Assistants will only be provided where they are necessary for the safe operation of vehicles and/or the care of children or young people. A Passenger Assistant will not necessarily be provided

simply because the pupil is school-aged or because he/she does not know the driver.

6.3 All staff involved in the delivering home to school transport hold a Disclosure & Barring Certificate (DBS) at the enhanced level.

6.4 Assistance with travel will be provided to meet the needs of a child/young person and there may be circumstances when the transport will need to be reviewed as it is not working. While it is acknowledged that the child/young person has SEND and this may impact upon their behaviour, if the conduct of the child/young person compromises the safety of anyone travelling with them, the Council reserves the right to suspend or withdraw the transport provision. In these cases the Council will work with the family to try to find another travel solution for the child/young person. Please see Section C.

6.5 Parents and carers should contact the School and College Transport Team if they have any concerns regarding the driver, passenger assistant or other passengers travelling on the vehicle.

7. Application and assessment process

7.1 Eligibility for travel assistance will be considered as part of any new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan assessment. The assessment for travel assistance will be undertaken at the stage the draft EHC plan is issued.

7.2 Where an EHC plan has already been issued, or a child or young person does not have an EHC in place, an application form for travel assistance must be completed.

7.3 Where a child or young person is in receipt of travel assistance and there is a change in circumstances such as change of address, school or change in the child or young person's special needs or disability a request to amend travel assistance should be submitted.

7.4 Requests for travel assistance will be given full consideration and will take account of the specific needs of the child or young person. Where it is decided travel assistance is required it will be implemented as soon as possible following the decision. In a situation where a new contract and/or a passenger assistant needs to be engaged this time scale may be longer in order to fulfil procurement and recruitment processes.

7.5 The application process is dealt with in three stages.

Stage 1: Application Process

Travel assistance will be considered as part of any new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan assessment. The assessment for travel assistance will be undertaken at the stage the draft EHC plan is issued and will be based on the school placement proposed.

Where this assessment indicates that the child is not eligible for travel assistance, parents/carers will be advised accordingly and will have a right to appeal against this decision, please see Section D.

Where an EHC plan has already been issued, or a child or young person does not have an EHC plan in place, an application form for travel assistance must be completed.

Where a child or young person is in receipt of travel assistance and there is a change in circumstances such as change of address, school or change in the child's or young person's special needs and/or disability a request to amend travel assistance should be submitted.

Application forms can be obtained from the Bury Council website www.bury.gov.uk or by telephoning the School and College Transport team on 0161 253 6968 or emailing schoolandcollegetransport@bury.gov.uk.

Applications will be acknowledged within five working days on receipt of the application. An initial evaluation of the application will then determine whether assistance is likely to be approved, declined or whether further assessment is required. The parent/carer will be informed in writing of the outcome of the application.

Stage 2: Assessment

This stage will include the evaluation of written evidence and family circumstances. It could lead to an assessment for independent travel training which would include a home visit, consultation with the child or young person's school/caseworkers and any other relevant specialists.

This initial evaluation will normally be completed within fifteen working days following Stage 1 depending on the complexity of the circumstances. If further evidence is required or an assessment for independent travel training needs to be undertaken, this may delay the process and parents/carers will be notified in writing within ten working days, unless for reasons outside the Council's control it is not possible to do so within that time, in which case it will be done as soon as reasonably practicable after that. It is possible at this stage that the application may be declined and parents/carers may appeal against such a decision if they wish.

Stage 3: Implementation

Where the Council agrees to provide travel assistance it will also discuss the type of travel assistance that may be suitable to meet the needs of the child's or young person and their family.

The agreed travel assistance will normally be implemented within ten working days following the offer being made.

If a parent/carer does not accept the travel assistance offered by the Council the appeals process should be undertaken. The process will be suspended pending the outcome of an appeal and parents/carers will need to take responsibility for their child's attendance at school while the appeal is ongoing. Please refer to section D for the appeals process.

If travel assistance is granted for a limited period, parents/carers will be required to submit a change in travel request, or to provide further information, in order to secure continued assistance. At any point throughout the process you have the right to appeal as detailed in Section D.

8 Travel assistance review

8.1 All children and young people's eligibility for travel assistance will be reviewed regularly and at least annually. For children and young people with EHC Plans, their continued eligibility for travel assistance will be discussed at the child or

young person's school as part of their annual review. Parents/carers should attend the review in order to consider whether or not travel assistance continues to be appropriate. Where travel assistance has been granted on a time-limited basis further information will be sought prior to the end of the agreed assistance period to enable a timely review to take place. The Council may also review eligibility for travel assistance, this may be by means of a scheduled meeting or via telephone contact. If parents/carers do not participate in these reviews it may result in travel assistance being withdrawn. Parents/carers will be informed of all decisions in writing, including notification of the right to appeal.

8.2 Travel assistance will also be reviewed when there is a significant change in circumstances, such as a change in home address, school or a change in the child's or young person's needs. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the Council immediately of any changes that may affect the provision of travel assistance.

8.3 Any changes will be implemented from the beginning of the next half school term / school term or sooner where possible.

Cessation of Support

8.4 The Council will review and remove travel assistance where the child or young person's individual circumstances have changed and either the child or young person is no longer eligible for support, or the child or young person has been assessed as not requiring such support. Assistance may also cease on the request of the parent/carer who may have made alternative arrangements for their child's or young person's travel to school.

Section B Post 16 Travel

9.1 Local authorities do not have to provide any free or subsidised post 16 travel assistance but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement outlining the arrangements for the provision of travel or assistance that the authority considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of young people attending sixth form education or training[6].

9.2 Local Authorities have a duty to facilitate access to full-time education for all young people aged 16 -18 years [7] and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. Under Raising the Participation Age Agenda, young people must remain in full time education and training until the age of 18 years. Under the 'September guarantee', every young person aged 16 or 17 should be offered a suitable place in education or training.

9.3 In line with the Local Authority's duty under the Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable and assist participation of learners with learning difficulties in education and learning, this policy will apply, in some cases to young people up to the age of 25 subject to an individual assessment of need.

9.4 In line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and as part of the SEND reforms, it is expected that young people will work towards independence from the earliest opportunities both at home and through their educational placement. The majority of young people who will attend college will be able to travel independently and for those who cannot, opportunities for this to take place should be maximised, through a range of providers.

9.5 The responsibility for travel to and from college rests with the young person and their family. There are a number of travel options available within the local community that young people can access.

9.6 Alternative travel options are listed in the Post 16 Travel Policy Statement. This is Bury's Transport policy statement which is intended to inform young people in years 11, 12 and 13, and their parents about what travel arrangements and support are available locally. It is published in May each year to help inform choices for the following academic year.

9.7 Travel assistance may be provided for young people over 16 years with special educational needs who are attending a full time course (minimum 20 hours) at the nearest provision to their home. Where a young person is not attending the provision nearest to their home address travel assistance will not be provided.

9.8 Travel assistance is not available for trips, work experience or any other activity associated with the college course. Alternative arrangements should be discussed directly with the college.

9.9 The options that will be considered when assessing the travel assistance that will be provided may include:

Mileage rate: The council may re-imburse parents a mileage rate if they choose to transport their young person to college in their own vehicle. Mileage

[6] Post 16 transport and travel support to education and training January 2019, Section 509AA of the Education Act 1996

[7] Section 509AC of the Education Act 1996 defines persons of sixth form age for the purposes of the sixth form transport duty.

is calculated based on the Council's ICT database measurement tool and will be paid for a maximum of two return journeys per day.

Personal Travel Budget (PTB): It may be possible for the Council to provide parents/carers with an amount of money to enable them to provide personalised travel arrangements that best and most flexibly suit the needs of the young person and their family. The sum provided will be at the discretion of the Council; it will be based on the distance travelled from home to college. Personal travel budgets consider the route from parents/carers home address to college and the distance is measured using the Council's transport software, the personal budget is then based on the mileage for two return journeys per day. The travel allowance for a personal travel budget is contained at Appendix A and published on the Council's website www.bury.gov.uk.

A personal travel budget must be used to facilitate the young person attending college, however, it can be used in a variety of ways such as:

- support the cost of driving your young person to and from college (purchase of fuel).
- arrangements with a friend or relative to take the young person to college.
- arrangements with a friend or relative to act as a PA for the young person in a family members vehicle or their own.
- arrangements to book an individual taxi.
- arrangements to car share or book a joint taxi with other parents where their young people are attending the same college.
- purchase of travel passes for other children/young people so they can travel to school/college whilst parents transport the young person in receipt of the personal travel budget.
- purchase of college enrichment classes

Independent travel training: independent travel training may be considered for college students.

Independent travel training focuses on the needs and capabilities of the young person and is delivered through working closely with parents/carers and college staff. It can enhance the young person's confidence and independence by developing personal, social and life skills. Independent travel training will also develop young people's personal safety awareness and road safety skills when using public transport. Criteria for successful completion of the training will be based on an agreed comprehensive training programme and a copy of the final assessment will be provided to parents/carers. Successful completion of Independent Travel Training will be signed-off by the Council and parents/carers.

Top up training will be available to support young people with transition on social routes during college holidays. Social routes may include travel to family houses, places of interest and social events such as youth groups.

All applications for travel assistance will be reviewed to determine if an assessment for independent travel training should take place. If an assessment for travel training is deemed appropriate a further assessment will be undertaken by a qualified Travel Trainer and involves contributions from the young person and their parents, school staff and other professionals.

Independent travel training may be considered for all young people that are attending a post 16 provision.

Adult learners

10.1 Local authorities have a duty with regard to transport or travel for adult learners. The overall intention of the adult transport duty is to ensure that those with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation are able to undertake further education and training after their 19th birthday to help them move towards more independent living.

10.2 An adult learner is a person who starts a course of study **after** their 19th birthday. If they are a 'young adult', they will have an Education, Health and Care plan.

Local authorities must make arrangements for the provision of transport or travel assistance, as they consider necessary, in respect of:

- Adults who are aged 19 or over, to facilitate their attendance at further or higher educational institutions (FE and HE, where they are maintained or assisted by the local authority) or institutions within the further education sector (FE).
- Young adults (i.e. those with an Education Health and Care plan that can be maintained up to the age of 25) receiving education or training at institutions outside both the further and higher education sectors. For these young adults, support is only provided where the local authority has secured the provision of education or training at those institutions and the provision of boarding accommodation that is linked to that education or training.

10.3 In making that decision on whether transport provision is required, the Council will take account of the relevant circumstances, including the age of the adult, the nature of the route which the adult could reasonably be expected to take and their ability to travel independently. Case law says that, in deciding what is necessary, local authorities "must exercise their judgment judiciously and in good faith".

10.4 If local authorities *do* consider it necessary to make such travel assistance, then any transport provided must be provided free of charge.

10.5 Even if the local authority *does not* consider it necessary to make arrangements to provide free transport to adult learners receiving education or training at the institutions mentioned above, they have a discretion to pay some or all of the reasonable travelling expenses if no other arrangements have been made.

10.6 The options that will be considered when assessing the travel assistance that will be provided will include, but are not limited to:

Mileage rate: The council will re-imburse parents/carers a mileage rate if they choose to transport their young adult to college in their own vehicle. Mileage is calculated based on the Council's ICT database measurement tool and will be paid for a maximum of two return journeys per day.

Personal Travel Budget (PTB): It may be possible for the Council to provide parents/carers with an amount of money to enable them to provide personalised travel arrangements that best and most flexibly suit the needs of their child and family. The sum provided will be at the discretion of the Council; it will be based on the distance travelled from home to college and will not exceed the cost of direct provision of transport by the Council, or a share of that cost where the young person would otherwise travel with other children in a shared vehicle. Personal travel budgets consider the route from parents/carers home address to college and the distance is measured using the Council's transport software, the personal budget is then based on the mileage for two return journeys per day. The travel allowance for a personal travel budget is contained at Appendix A and published on the Council's website www.bury.gov.uk.

A personal travel budget must be used to facilitate the young adult attending college; however, it can be used in a variety of ways such as:

- support the cost of driving your young person to and from college (purchase of fuel).
- arrangements with a friend or relative to take the young person to college.
- arrangements with a friend or relative to act as a PA for the young person in a family members vehicle or their own.
- arrangements to book an individual taxi.
- arrangements to car share or book a joint taxi with other parents where their young people are attending the same college.
- purchase of travel passes for other children/young people so they can travel to school/college whilst parents transport the young person in receipt of the personal travel budget.
- purchase of a travel pass to allow the young adult to travel to college accompanied by an adult if necessary.
- purchase of college enrichment classes

Transport vehicles: Where assessed as essential, the Council may provide a vehicle to transport a young adult to and from college. Where transport vehicles are provided, these will be either Council vehicles and drivers or those provided by a suitably qualified and licensed commercial provider working to contractual standards set by the Council.

Transport will be provided on shared vehicles and at the beginning and end of the college day only. Transport will not be provided to accommodate individual timetables.

Communal pick up/drop off points may be considered for young adults within a reasonable distance from their home address. Where this option is considered an element of independent travel training may be required to support the young adult travelling safely to the meeting point. A home pick up and drop off will be made where it is deemed essential to the young adults special educational needs or disabilities.

Independent travel training: independent travel training may be considered for college students.

Independent travel training focuses on the needs and capabilities of the young person and is delivered through working closely with parents/carers and college

staff. It can enhance the young person's confidence and independence by developing personal, social and life skills. Independent travel training will also develop young people's personal safety awareness and road safety skills when using public transport. Criteria for successful completion of the training will be based on an agreed comprehensive training programme and a copy of the final assessment will be provided to parents/carers. Successful completion of Independent Travel Training will be signed-off by the Council and parents/carers.

Top up training will be available to support young people with transition on social routes during college holidays. Social routes may include travel to family houses, places of interest and social events such as youth groups.

All applications for travel assistance will be reviewed to determine if an assessment for independent travel training should take place. If an assessment for travel training is deemed appropriate a further assessment will be undertaken by a qualified Travel Trainer and involves contributions from the young person and their parents, school staff and other professionals.

Independent travel training may be considered for all young people that are attending a post 16 provision.

SECTION C:

1. Legislation – Home to School Travel

1.1 This policy has been developed with full regard to the Department for Education Guidance on Home to School Travel and Transport

Travel to school for children of compulsory school age[8]

Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training[9]

1.2 Under section 508 (B) of the Education Act 1996 the council must provide free travel assistance to facilitate the attendance at school of eligible children resident in the borough of Bury.

A child is eligible if they are of compulsory school age, attend their nearest suitable school and:

- Live more than the statutory walking distance from that school, or
- Could not reasonably be expected to walk to that school because of their special education needs, disability or mobility problem, even if they are accompanied by their parent.
- Would not be able to walk to that school in reasonable safety, even if they were accompanied by their parent.

1.3 Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly under s.444 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended). This includes arranging any necessary travel to and from school and/or accompanying their child as necessary. No dispensation will be made for parents who are working at the time their children travel to and from school or who take other children to other schools at the time their children travel to and from school. In both cases parents are expected to make other suitable arrangements for someone else to accompany their children as necessary.

The Council has a duty to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school.

1.4 There is no statutory entitlement to travel assistance for pre-school children. Children of pre-school age will not be provided with travel arrangements other than where they have been assessed as requiring an EHCP with specialist provision being named on the plan.

1.5 In support of this policy, the Council works with schools to provide safe travel routes to and from school, to encourage sustainable methods of transport, including walking and to encourage all forms of independent travel by children and young people wherever possible and practicable.

1.6 Where the Council has provided assistance with travel to support a child to access education, parents/carers remain responsible for their child's safety before and after these arrangements take place.

1.7 While parents/carers have the right to express a preference for which school they wish their child to attend, a child and young person who attends a school which is further away than their nearest suitable qualifying school that can

[8] Travel to school for children of compulsory school age – January 2024
[9] Post-16 Transport and travel support to education and training – January 2019

meet educational need with places available, will not be eligible for travel assistance, even if the distance from home to the school they attend is more than the qualifying walking distance.

1.8 If the child has an Education Health and Care plan and where another provider is named on an EHC plan but the local authority is satisfied that more local provision can meet need, the cost of travel to and from the provider that is further away from home will usually be the responsibility of the parent. However, if the difference in cost of the placement (including transport) is not significant, then the local authority will support the parents' choice of school or college through travel assistance.

1.9 A qualifying school is taken to mean the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any special educational needs that the child may have.

1.10 Any travelling arrangements or expenses will be the responsibility of parents/carers if there is a nearer suitable qualifying school. It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure their child gets to and from school safely and they should consider the practicalities of choosing a school that is not within the qualifying walking distance.

2 Responsibilities – Home to School Travel

2.1 Under the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006), local authorities have a duty in certain circumstances to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary in order to ensure that suitable home to school travel arrangements are made for the purpose of facilitating a child's attendance at relevant educational establishments for children below 6th form age.

2.2 In addition, local authorities also have a duty to facilitate access to full-time education for young people aged 16-19 and this may include assistance with travel in certain circumstances.

2.3 The family must be able to demonstrate the following:

- Family must reside with the Borough of Bury for the duration of their course.
- College/school must be the nearest that offers the course. If the young person chooses a college further away they must demonstrate exceptional need to attend that college to be given assistance. If they cannot do so the young person will be responsible for their own costs.

3 Application of the policy and overarching principles

3.1 **Change of School Day**: The council will consider making changes to arrangements however, if additional costs are involved, the Council reserves the right to make arrangements for all or part of those costs to be charged to the school concerned.

If notification is provided in advance of a change to the school start or finish day for school events or school holidays/end of term the School and College Transport Team will endeavour to provide transport wherever possible, ensuring the effective and efficient use of resources.

If changes to the school day are made at short notice or are unplanned it may not be possible to adjust the transport arrangements however, wherever possible transport will be provided.

It should be noted that examination timetables do not constitute a change in the school day and transport will not be adjusted.

3.2 **Home Address**: the address where a child or young person is habitually and normally resident. Where a child/young person spends time with both parents/carers in separate homes and both have parental caring responsibility, or the home of someone who does have formal parental caring responsibility for the child the Council will treat both as the home address, providing they are within the Borough of Bury. Home to School transport may be provided to an alternative address e.g. grandparents, child-minders where this is an agreed regular arrangement. Any change in transport remains the decision of the Council taking into consideration efficient use of its resources.

3.3 **Mileage rate**: A mileage rate will be paid for two return journeys per day based upon the mileage determined by the Council's ICT transport data base measurement tool. This will be paid after reconciling with school attendance records. Current mileage rates are detailed in Appendix A and on the Council's website.

3.4 **Relevant Educational Establishment**: Section 508 B10 of the Education Act 1996 defines a relevant educational establishment as either a qualifying school or places (other than schools) where a child is receiving education by virtue of the arrangements made under section 19 (1) of the Act. Qualifying schools are community, foundation or voluntary schools; community or foundation special schools, non-maintained special schools, pupil referral units, maintained nursery schools or city technology colleges, city colleges for the technology of the arts or Academies.

3.5 **Statutory School Age**: children and young people aged from five years of age up to the last day of the school year when they reach 16 years of age. Following the Raising the Participation Age, young people must remain in fulltime education and training until the age of 18 years. This has not affected the definition of compulsory or statutory school age and eligibility for free school travel. Also, under the 'September guarantee', every young person aged 16 or 17 should be offered a suitable place in education or training.

3.6 **Statutory Walking Distance:** statutory walking distance is two miles for pupils aged up to eight and three miles for those aged eight and over. The statutory walking distance is measured by the shortest route along which a child accompanied as necessary may walk with reasonable safety. Safe walking routes are measured using the local authority's computerised mapping system as defined by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG).

3.7 **Registered Support/Assistance Dogs:** Reasonable adjustments will be made in order to avoid discrimination against children and young people that may have a support/assistance dog. Suitable arrangements will be made so that a child or young person can be accompanied by their support/assistance dog on their journey.

3.8 **Transport for Greater Manchester**

Travel support can be obtained from Concessionary Fares operated by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). 2 Piccadilly Place, Manchester. M1

3BG Telephone 0161 244 1000 general enquiries (7am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm Saturday and Sunday)

Concessionary travel – is offered to disabled people, whatever their age. Depending on individual circumstances this can be free or reduced cost travel on buses, trains and the Metro link. More information is available from

TfGM website or 0161 244 1050.

Ring and Ride service provides door to door transport for people who find it very difficult or impossible to reach a bus stop of access general buses. The service is not intended for daily travel to or from college but could help a young person with other journeys. The ring and ride service can be accessed through,

TfGM Ring and Ride or telephone enquiries 0845 688 4933 or 0161 200 6011, telephone bookings 0845 688 3989.

Travel voucher scheme – this is available for people who are unable to use general buses and who have serious walking difficulties or are registered blind. Vouchers are not free but are substantially discounted. If young people have any queries about the scheme they should contact TfGM details above.

4 Additional Journeys

4.1 **Introduction**. This section explains the Council's policy for the provision of Travel assistance for journeys additional to the normal provision at the beginning and end of the normal school working day.

4.2 **School Trips**. Home to school transport timings may be adjusted by the Council on request from schools to take account of connections with the departure/ arrival of educational or recreational school trips. Schools must notify such requests to the Council as early as possible to enable an assessment of any additional costs to be made. Where adjustments in timings would result in additional transport costs to the Council, schools will need to take this into account in the planning of school trips, and such costs must be reimbursed to the Council as part of the school's costing arrangements for the whole trip.

4.3 **Work Experience**. Transport will not be provided to enable students to undertake work experience.

4.4 **Induction Days/ 'Taster Days'**. Transport will not be available for children attending Induction Days or 'Taster Days' at the Council's Special Schools and resourced provisions.

4.5 **Reduced Timetables**. Travel assistance will be provided for children and young people attending school on a reduced timetable. If it is not possible to accommodate a reduced timetable on shared transport an alternative offer of travel assistance will be provided.

4.6 **Breakfast Clubs/After School Clubs**. Transport will not be provided or adjusted to enable students to attend breakfast clubs / after school clubs that do not fulfil part of the school curriculum. However, where a child/young person attends after school club on a regular basis on a specified day parents/carers

may receive a reimbursement of mileage on the day(s) the child/young person does not access transport.

4.7 **Illness at School**. Transport will not be provided for students who are taken ill at school to enable them to return home. This is a parental or school responsibility.

4.8 **Medical/Dental Appointments**. Transport will not be provided or adjusted to enable students to attend medical or dental appointments. This is a parental responsibility.

4.9 **Detentions**. Transport will not be provided to take children home after detentions. This is a parental responsibility.

4.10 **Short Breaks / Respite**. Transport will not be provided to and from Short Breaks or respite appointments.

4.11 **College Attendance Whilst Registered at School.** For older children who spend a whole day at college or become dual-registered at the college whilst still being a registered pupil at a school, travel arrangements on those days may be adjusted to set down and pick up at the college, if this is possible within existing arrangements at no additional cost. If not, travel arrangements are the responsibility of the school or parent/carer. Transport arrangements for journeys during the school day to attend college placements are the responsibility of the school at which pupils are registered (for pupils with EHC Plans this will be the school named on the statement or plan).

5 Health and Safety

5.1 All wheelchairs and buggies used for passenger seating in the vehicles (i.e. not folded and stowed) must be crash tested and certified suitable for transport.

5.2 The School and College Transport team will use the Transport Information Forms completed by parents/carers each year, together with information provided by the EHC team, to inform Risk Assessments for travel arrangements for each child. The majority of children/young people will be covered by a generic Risk Assessment for transport. However, in more complex cases, a specific Risk Assessment will be undertaken. Relevant information from these Risk Assessments will be shared with transport providers to enable them to exercise their duty of care to passengers that they are transporting. Such information will be protected by GDPR regulations and the Council's contractors in accordance with agreed data protection arrangements.

5.3 Passenger Assistants are trained in disability awareness, safeguarding, first aid and receive additional training specific to the child's needs where necessary. However, in the event of an emergency, Passenger Assistants and drivers will contact 999 emergency services in the first instance.

5.4 Passenger Assistants will not be provided for children or young people requiring medical interventions throughout their journey to and from school. The council will work with health, social care and parents/carers to identify any medical needs when travelling.

5.5 There is no expectation that a child's/young person's routine medication will be administered on the journey to and from school, or that routine medical procedures will be carried out.

5.6 It may sometimes be necessary to administer a child's emergency medication. Emergency medication should be administered in accordance with instructions from a health care professional. The driver or passenger assistant responsible for

administering the medication should receive training from a health care professional.

5.7 It is vital that parents/carers advise the School and College Transport team of any health concerns that may affect their child whilst on transport. Such information may include details of things such as allergies, for example, even if not thought to be directly relevant to transport. This information must be included in the Transport Information Form when vehicle transport is agreed and reviewed annually, and whenever the child's needs change.

5.8 Children and young people are not permitted to consume food or drinks whilst on board a vehicle unless this has been agreed in exceptional circumstances by the School and College Transport team. This standard will be strictly enforced to ensure the continuing safety of all passengers whilst travelling.

5.9 It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that arrangements are in place AM and PM to ensure the safe handover of their child to and from the care of the transport provider.

5.10 The handover of children must happen at the vehicle, apart from in exceptional circumstances agreed by the School and College Transport team in advance, to ensure that the Passenger Assistant and driver can maintain the supervision and safety of other passengers.

5.11 In the case of extreme weather conditions, transport services may not operate. Decisions to cancel transport will be taken by the council and/or transport providers according to information provided by schools and on the basis of their own risk assessments.

5.12 In the case of extreme weather conditions where transport is cancelled, should a parent or carer choose to transport their child to school themselves, then it is their responsibility to undertake the return journey as well.

5 Journey times

6.1 The Council will endeavour to ensure that pupils arrive at school fit to learn and recognise that the length of the journey to school can affect this aim.

6.2 Every effort will be made to ensure a child or young person does not have to travel for more than:

- 45 minutes if they attend nursery or primary school.
- 75 minutes if they attend secondary school.

6.3 Journey times may be longer where pupils are travelling to schools and colleges outside of the Borough of Bury.

6.4 On occasions there may be factors outside the Council's control e.g. unforeseen traffic congestion or bad weather that may affect journey times.

6.5 In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the Council to vary planned routes, and this may affect pick up and drop off times. Where this is the case the Council or provider will endeavour to contact parents/carers in advance to advise them.

6.6 Pick up and drop off times affect journey times and will therefore not be altered to fit parental circumstances (for example, a parent's work schedule)

7 Behaviour

7.1 The School and College Transport Team will work with schools to promote positive behaviour on home to school transport.

7.2 A child's challenging behaviour may be part of their special educational needs or disability, and they may use their behaviour to communicate their needs. The team will work with parents, schools, contractors and passenger assistants to find positive ways of managing this behaviour where possible.

7.3 In certain circumstances it may be beneficial for parents/carers to inform the School and College Transport Team of any circumstances that may affect their child's behaviour on transport. For example, this may include a change in their medication, family circumstances or family bereavement.

7.4 Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour that may endanger the safety and wellbeing of other passengers. This may include but is not limited to assaulting another passenger, pushing and kicking, swearing, verbal abuse, bullying, distracting the driver, refusing to wear a seatbelt or refusing to remain seated. It may endanger the safety and wellbeing of other passengers. It is recognised that children and young people with SEN may display challenging behaviour.

7.5 Whilst the child's/young person's additional needs will always be considered, the School and College Transport Team reserves the right to refuse to provide travel assistance where a child's/young person's behaviour is such that it is unacceptable. In the first instance parents/carers will always receive a telephone call to discuss the initial concerns. Parents/Carers will receive no more than four letters;

(i) initially raising the concerns – confirming details of the telephone call and any strategies proposed

(ii) informal warning indicating the remedial steps taken and the potential of transport removal. Meeting to be arranged with school and parents to discuss further strategies that may be implemented on transport.

(iii) final warning indicating that transport will be removed.

The School and College Transport team will issue the fourth and final letter confirming the removal of transport, citing the reasons for the removal, the date of the proposed removal. In these cases, parents become responsible for their child's attendance at school and any transport required.

7.6 Travel assistance will only be withdrawn as a last resort and in these circumstances parents/carers will be offered an alternative form of travel assistance to support the child/young person accessing education.

7.7 Where the Council or its contractors consider that a child's / young person's behaviour is so extreme as to constitute an immediate or ongoing risk to the Health and Safety of her/himself, other service users, the vehicle crew, or members of the public, the Council reserves the right to suspend the provision of transport immediately until or unless the issue can be resolved by parents/ carers, the child's/young person's school/college, or other appropriate professionals, to the Council's satisfaction that all reasonable adjustments have been made. If a child or young person is suspended from the provision of transport in these circumstances, parents will become responsible for their child's attendance at school and the provision of any travel support required.

7.8 Any wilful damage that incurs cost to the transport provider for either repair or cleaning remains the responsibility of the parent/carer of the child concerned. Continued or repeat behaviour that results in wilful damage can result in withdrawal of travel assistance.

7.9 If parents, schools, drivers or the passenger assistant have any concerns regarding a child/young person's behaviour on transport they should inform

the School and College Transport team in the first instance. All concerns will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

8 Absences

8.1 Where a child cannot attend school on any particular day due to illness it is the parents/carers responsibility to:

8.2 Contact the School and College Transport Team the day before travel is required, if it is known that the child will be off school the next day or;

8.3 Contact the passenger assistant or contractor as early as possible in the morning of the day their child is due to travel, if the child has only just begun to show signs of illness. Please do not contact the passenger escort or contractor after 7pm in the evening or before 7am in the morning.

8.4 Following an absence, parents/carers must notify the School and College Transport team in order to arrange for transport to be reinstated.

8.5 This advice should be given on **the day before** the child is due to return to school.

8.6 Travel assistance will be reviewed, and may be suspended for a period of time or permanently withdrawn, if it becomes apparent that transport is not being cancelled with reasonable advance warning. Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school in such circumstances.

9 Safeguarding Children and Young People

9.1 All children and young people will be handed over to a responsible adult at the drop off address within the Borough of Bury, provided by parent/carer. Drivers and Passenger Assistants are not permitted to leave children and young people with any person under the age of 16 or who is not an 'authorised' adult.

9.2 Prior to starting transport, the School and College Transport Team will request details of any authorised adult and/or emergency contact details for any person who a child or young person can be handed over to in the event of an emergency. Parents/Carers are required to inform the team of any changes to contact details.

9.3 A child or young person must never be removed from a vehicle anywhere on a route other than at the normal setting down point for that journey. The only exceptions to this would be long distance journeys, when it is necessary to make pre-agreed rest stops, or in emergencies.

10. Service Standards

10.1 The School and College Transport team is responsible for arranging and overseeing all agreed methods of travel assistance provided to pupils with or without an EHC Plan. Travel assistance will be provided according to the agreed school placement arrangements (e.g. daily, fortnightly, or in the case of 52-week provision at the start and end of the placement only). The responsibilities of the School and College Transport team include, but are not limited to;

- Implementing agreed travel assistance, e.g. allocating suitable routes and pick-up and drop-off points
- Day to day amendments/queries relating to travel arrangements
- Managing provider contracts
- Managing contracts with licensed transport providers
- Managing in-house transport services provided by Bury Council Transport

- Monitoring of transport providers
- Investigating and responding to complaints about transport services

10.2 The service standards described below act as guidance and clarity for the service users for who travel assistance is provided. Underlying these standards is the principle that, if the Council agrees to provide travel arrangements, it will be provided in a safe, suitable and cost-effective manner, taking account of the child's specific needs and with regard to the best use of the Council's resources.

11 Vehicles

11.1 All transport will be provided in accordance with contractual standards and legislation.

11.2 All vehicles will be properly licensed in accordance with local regulation and national legislation.

11.3 The Council will conduct regular monitoring of quality and service standards on all vehicles operated by the Council or its contractors.

11.4 Vehicles will have specialist wheelchair access and wheelchair restraint systems where necessary.

11.5 All vehicles will be road worthy, clean inside and out, fitted with seat belts and carry emergency equipment i.e. fire extinguisher and first aid kit and any other equipment/notices required by law, e.g. children sign on front and back of vehicle.

12 Passenger Assistants

12.1 The Council may provide a Passenger Assistant for children and young people who have severe physical or learning disabilities and/or challenging behaviours and where the child's safety requires it, and as determined during the assessment phase.

12.2 All Passenger Assistants must be compassionate of the needs of the child/young person and their family.

12.3 Passenger Assistants are expected to be seated in the rear of the vehicle with a view of all children/young people travelling.

12.4 Passenger Assistants are trained in disability awareness, safeguarding, first aid and receive additional training specific to the child's needs where necessary.

12.5 The need for a Passenger Assistant will be reviewed annually as part of the child's/young person's annual review.

12.6 Passenger Assistants will not be provided where parents/carers make their own travel arrangements.

12.7 Where provided, the Council will make every effort to ensure the same Passenger Assistant is used on a regular basis. This may not always be possible due to staff shortages, illness, holidays, retirement and staff resignations. Changes may also be necessary from time to time to ensure the efficient use of resources.

12.8 The Passenger Assistant should assist children on and off the vehicle and ensure they are seated safely while the vehicle is moving.

12.9 Passenger Assistants must treat parents/carers and children with respect and avoid confrontations. It is also expected that parents/carers will treat the passenger assistants with respect and consideration.

12.10 Passenger Assistants should deliver children to a member of school staff on arrival at the school so that at no time are children left unattended on the vehicle.

12.11 If the Passenger Assistant has a concern for any child in their care, the Head Teacher and the School and College Transport Team will be informed.

12.12 Passenger Assistants are not authorised to leave a child with anyone other than their parent/carer or named responsible adult (16+) identified in advance to the School and College Transport team in writing by the parent/carer.

12.13 All Passenger Assistants will have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.

12.14 Passenger Assistants must carry and display suitable identification at all times.

12.15 Passenger Assistants must adhere to the Council's no smoking policy.

12.16 Passenger Assistants have strict instructions not to enter into any personal arrangements with parents/carers, including changing pick up or drop off points without consulting the Council.

12.17 If parents/carers, schools or driver have any concerns regarding a Passenger Assistant they should inform the School and College Transport team in the first instance. All concerns will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

13 Drivers

13.1 All drivers must be compassionate of the needs of the child/young person and their family.

13.2 Drivers must carry and display suitable identification at all times.

13.3 Drivers must have enhanced DBS clearance.

13.4 All drivers undertake safeguarding training and where required wheelchair restraint training.

13.5 All drivers must hold a relevant licence for the type of vehicle they are operating. Taxi/Private Hire Drivers will be licensed by Bury Council

13.6 Drivers must, as far as possible, be punctual.

13.7 Drivers must ensure that all wheelchairs are securely restrained.

13.8 Drivers must treat parents and children with respect and avoid confrontations. It is also expected that parents/carers will treat the drivers with respect and consideration.

13.9 Drivers must report any poor behaviour of passengers to their supervisor to relay onto the School and College Transport Team. Also to the school and parent as necessary.

13.10 Drivers must ensure that all passenger harness and safety straps are properly adjusted and fitted securely before the journey commences.

13.11 Drivers must adhere to the Council's no smoking policy.

13.12 The driver is to stop, as close to the home address or collection point as traffic conditions will safely permit.

13.13 The driver is not allowed to sound their horn to alert parents that they are there.

13.14 Neither drivers nor Passenger Assistants are responsible for taking a child across the road if a parent/carer is waiting on the other side.

13.15 If parents/carers, schools or Passenger Assistants have any concerns regarding a driver they should inform the School and College Transport team in the first instance. All concerns will be investigated, and appropriate action taken.

14 Vehicle Waiting Times (Mornings)

14.1 Parents/carers are expected to be available at home or at an agreed collection point, at an agreed time to meet transport in the morning.

14.2 To keep journey times down to an absolute minimum and ensure that all pupils arrive at school on time, all vehicles will adhere to strict waiting time limits as follows:

14.3 If a child is not ready, or not at the agreed collection point, the vehicle will wait for a maximum of 3 minutes after the agreed pick up time and then move off. If this means the child is unable to travel on the organised vehicle, the parent/carer is then responsible for ensuring that the child gets to school on time.

14.4 If the vehicle arrives early for a pick-up it will wait until the official set time and then a maximum of 3 minutes before moving off. If this means the child is unable to travel on the organised vehicle, the parent/carer is then responsible for ensuring that the child gets to school on time.

14.5 If there is a temporary change to the pick up time due to a passenger not travelling the contractor/driver/passenger assistant will inform parents of the revised pick up time.

14.6 If the vehicle is running late for a pickup, the passenger assistant is expected to advise parents/carers of the delay as soon as possible. When a vehicle arrives at a family home or collection point, the horn will **not** be sounded. Parents/carers are expected to have their child ready and waiting to board the vehicle.

14.7 If a child/young person is not available for pick up within the time limits given above, for any reason, and no prior cancellation of the transport requirement has been received by the Council, this will be considered as a 'no show' and parents/carers will be advised accordingly. If 3 'no shows' are recorded during the Academic Year transport will be withdrawn and parents/carers will be responsible for the child/young person's attendance at school and any transport required.

14.8 Where it is known that a child/young person may experience additional difficulties or anxieties around the morning pick up time strategies can be implemented to support the family. This can include the driver or passenger assistant calling/texting the family to advise they are on their way.

15 Vehicle Waiting Times (Afternoons)

15.1 Parents/carers must be available at home or the nominated delivery point, at the regular drop off time, every afternoon to meet their child. Drivers cannot wait for parents as they often have other duties to fulfil, and any delays can cause anxiety for other families.

15.2 Parents/carers must provide emergency contact details.

15.3 In the event that a parent/carer is unable to meet their child at the specified time and location, the emergency contact details will be used. If unsuccessful

and as a final resort, the child will be taken to a place of safety and the parent/carer will be notified. It will then be the parents/carers responsibility to collect from that place.

15.4 On occasion, parents/carers may need to make emergency alternative arrangements for the handover of their child to a nominated responsible adult, either at the home address or at an alternative address within the Borough of Bury. In these cases, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to notify the School and College Transport team and make suitable arrangements to ensure their child's safety.

15.5 Where transport is delayed by 15 minutes or more parents will be notified by the passenger assistant, driver or the School and College Transport Team.

15.6 In circumstances where vehicles are delayed or late arriving the parent/carer should contact the School and College Transport team. The team will take steps to directly address the situation with the provider.

15.7 Where no responsible adult is available to meet a child from transport on more than two occurrences, travel assistance will be reviewed and may be suspended or permanently withdrawn. In these cases, the parents/carers will receive no more than four letters

(i) initially raising the concerns

(ii) informal warning indicating the remedial steps taken and the potential of transport removal

(iii) final warning indicating that transport will be removed.

The School and College Transport team will issue a fourth and final letter confirming the removal of transport, citing the reasons for the removal, the date of the proposed removal and the parental route of appeal. In these cases, parents/carers become responsible for their child's attendance at school and any transport required.

16 Raising Concerns/Complaints

Once travel assistance has been agreed any concerns regarding the provision of the service should be made in the first instance to the School and College Transport team on 0161 253 6968 or by email schoolandcollegetransport@bury.gov.uk

All concerns will be investigated with the relevant parties and appropriate action taken.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you can make a formal complaint. All complaints will follow the council's corporate complaints procedure. Full details are available on the Council website, www.bury.gov.uk.

Any complaints regarding the outcome of the assessment process should be addressed as part of the appeals process explained in section D of this policy.

17 Glossary

Parent: birth parent, care, foster parent, adoptive parent, guardian.

Child: a pupil of compulsory school age (5-16 years) or a 3 to 4 year old attending specialist nursery/school provision.

Sixth form age: a young person aged 16-18 who starts a course of study before their 19th birthday at a sixth form or college, possibly continuing up to the age of 25 if the young person has an Education, Health & Care plan.

Adult learner: a person who starts a course of study after their 19th birthday and who, in the case of a young adult', will have an Education, Health and Care plan.

SECTION D Appeals

If an application for travel assistance is not approved by the Council, or the parent/carer disagrees with the type of assistance being offered, parent/carers have a right of appeal. The appeal should be made in writing within fifteen working days of the decision letter being received by the parents/carers.

Appeals are administered in two stages:

Stage 1: Review by Transport & Contract Manager

Within five working days of the appeal form being received, the parent/carer will be sent confirmation that their appeal has been received and that their appeal is under review.

Further evidence may be requested to support the appeal and consultation with case workers and professional bodies may be required. Stage 1 appeals are decided by the Transport & Contracts Manager. Parents should receive their decision letter within twenty working days of their appeal form being received.

Stage 2: Independent Panel - Independent Review of Evidence

If the parent/carer remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they should notify the Council in writing within 20 working days of receiving their Stage 1 appeal decision making clear the grounds on which they still wish to appeal.

The appeal will then be considered independently of the School and College Transport service and will involve consideration of all evidence gathered and the reasons for the decision being made. This will be undertaken by the multi-agency "Independent Panel," independent of the process to date and suitably experienced; this may include participation by head teachers from primary and secondary schools and members from the community and voluntary sector.

Parents/Carers will be invited to attend an appeal hearing, virtually or in person, to present their case. Where a parent does not wish or is unable to attend a hearing, the panel will make their decision based on written representations from the parent/carer.

The review will take place within 40 working days of the parent notifying the Council of their wish to escalate their appeal to stage 2.

Parents should receive their decision letter within five working days of the Council completing its considerations.

This decision is the final stage of the Council's appeal procedure in relation to travel assistance. If parents/carers remain dissatisfied they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. Details can be provided by the Council if necessary.

During the appeals process no new travel arrangements will be provided or, in the case of existing arrangements, no change will be implemented.

If after the appeal, travel assistance is agreed, it will commence from the date of the letter sent to the parent / carer. No backdated payments will be made nor will the Council accept any claims by parents/carers for costs incurred (e.g. for making alternative transport during the process of appeal.