



# Sefton Home to School Travel Policy

(for school children aged 5 -16)

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(2021-2022 Academic Year)

Prepared Travel Support

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## Foreword:



### **John Joseph Kelly**

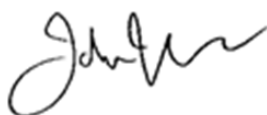
*Cabinet Member - Children, Schools and Safeguarding*

The Education Act 1996 makes provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel support arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. Sefton Council has developed this travel policy in accordance with this legislation and equalities legislation to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duty. Eligibility for travel support for all children and young people is set out within this policy.

In the Sefton 2030 Vision we outlined our partnership commitment to work together to ensure that people can access safe, quick, inclusive and reliable transport and travel. This commitment includes inclusive travel support for all eligible statutory school aged pupils helping them to achieve their ambitions through education and preparing them for future life choices.

Travel support available for eligible students includes; travel passes, Independent Travel Training (ITT) or Personal Travel Budget (PTB). Sefton Council will offer commissioned transport where there is no viable alternative available to the student. When we deliver this service we will seek to do so in an efficient, effective and customer-focussed way that uses public resources responsibly.

The desired outcome of this approach is to support students in arranging home to school or college transport and encourage their independence, enabling them to develop a skill for life, confidence and social skills as well as supporting equal access to continuing education/training and employment. Travel support will also promote safe, healthy and appropriate travel solutions that also ensure that sustainable modes of transport are encouraged and promoted wherever possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Kelly', written in a cursive style.

John Joseph Kelly

## **Developing Sefton's Home to School Travel Policy (2021-2022 Academic Year)**

Sefton Council has duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport for children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education or training. Sustainable modes of travel as those which may improve the physical well-being of users and the environmental well-being Sefton.

The purpose of the Policy is to publish how the council will meet its' legal duties to provide home to school transport to qualifying pupils The Policy is reviewed and published annually and when there are any proposed changes to statutory eligibility criteria for provision the Council will do this review in consultation with children, young people, parents, carers, partners, providers and key stakeholders.

The Policy reflects the statutory national eligibility criteria for the provision of Home to School Transport which is primarily home to school distance at qualifying schools. The Policy also includes the additional discretionary eligibility criteria linked to Sefton's Schools Admissions Policy this takes into account existing National and Local guidance and supports Sefton's 2030 Vision, Core Purpose and Children and Young People Plan.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their children get to and from school at the appropriate time each day. Travel arrangements are an important consideration when parent/carers are making school preferences. The parent/carer is responsible for ensuring home to school travel arrangements are in place. They remain responsible for their child until they are received on to school premises and after they leave the school premises.

When an application for education travel is made, we will use the criteria in this policy to assess entitlement. If home to school travel entitlement is refused, an explanation will be given in writing and there will be an opportunity to appeal.

We will explain and help an applicant to understand any part or all this policy on request Contact the Travel Support Team.

Some of the terms used in this document are defined in the glossary at the back.

## What is Sefton's Home to School Travel Policy?

This policy document sets out Sefton Council's Home to School Travel Policy for Children and Young People aged 5-16, including those that have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND).

The policy sets out the criteria for eligibility to travel support and describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers.

Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and on time, including any appropriate travel arrangements. Most pupils in Sefton:

- walk to school
- travel to school on public transport
- are driven to school
- accompanied if necessary by a parent/carer

It is not within the framework of this policy to provide home to school travel simply because families may have complex childcare or employment arrangements, which may make it difficult or inconvenient for parents/carers to take their child to school.

Sefton Local Authority does not ordinarily provide any assistance with home to school travel for children attending nursery/pre-school classes or for children who are under 5 when they start school. This is because children under 5 travel free on buses, trains and ferries within Merseyside. Local Authorities do not ordinarily provide any assistance to children who attend an independent (private fee paying) school.

School travel applications are assessed using an in-house Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping system that measures the nearest available walking route ('upper limits' for 'extended eligibility' which exceed statutory walking distances will be measured along road routes). Further information is contained in the section 'Establishing eligibility for travel assistance on distance grounds'.

Eligibility for travel assistance will be subject to review in the event of a change of circumstance and parents/carers should not assume that current eligibility will continue for the whole of the time that a child is at a school. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that they notify the Council of any change in circumstances that may change the eligibility of their child for travel assistance. Circumstances that might lead to a review of eligibility and consequent withdrawal of assistance include (but are not limited to):

- a change in the length of the walking route (e.g. as a result of a new shorter route being created or a nearer pedestrian entrance to a school being opened)
- re-classification of a hazardous route (e.g. as a result of a pedestrian crossing being installed or a road improvement which significantly lowers traffic volumes)

- an error in the calculation of distances
- a change in financial circumstances that means parents/carers no longer experience hardship
- the change to the statutory walking distance from two to three miles when a child reaches the age of eight (eligibility will automatically be reviewed at the end of year three)
- a change in the child's place of residence.

The same process of withdrawal of assistance will be followed whether a change impacts upon an individual, several children or a large group of children. Withdrawal of assistance will be subject to a period of notice. This will normally be one full term, except in the case of a permanent change of address, when assistance will be subject to immediate withdrawal (unless eligibility is established through receipt of an application for assistance at the new address). In considering the withdrawal of assistance, the Council will consider the potential impact upon the child and any consequential disruption to the child's education.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to make the necessary arrangements for attendance at an appropriate school or other setting, including submitting applications to the council, as required, for admission to school and for travel assistance. All applications assessed under this policy assume that all children and young people will be accompanied as necessary.

## Home School Travel: The National Context

The Education Act 1996 places a legal duty and a responsibility on parents/carers to ensure that their school aged children are registered at a school and attend regularly. Travel arrangements are an important consideration when parent/carers are making preferences for schools and it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that appropriate home to school travel arrangements are in place.

Section 508A of the Act places a duty on local authorities in England to assess the school travel needs of all children and persons of sixth form age in their area and to assess and promote the use of sustainable modes of travel.

Section 508B of the Act sets out the general duties placed on local authorities to make such school travel arrangements as they consider necessary for 'Eligible children' within their area, to facilitate their attendance at the relevant educational establishment. Such arrangements must be provided free of charge. This means if a child is eligible we will assist with travel arrangements to get them to school.

Section 508C of the Act provides local authorities with discretionary powers to make school travel arrangements for other children not covered by Section 508B but any transport does not have to be free. We can also look at children who are not eligible and make travel arrangements but we can charge.

Section 508F of the Act places a duty on local authorities to make any transport or other arrangements that they consider necessary, or that the Secretary of State directs, for the purpose of facilitating the attendance of learners who are aged 19 or over at certain educational establishments. The transport must be provided free of charge if the transport is considered necessary.

Section 509AD of the Act places a duty on local authorities, when exercising its travel functions, to have regard, amongst other things, of any wish of a parent for their child to be educated at a particular school on the grounds of the parents' religion or belief. Religion or belief in this instance means any religious or philosophical belief, including a lack thereof. However, there is no general statutory duty requiring the local authority to provide free transport to a faith school.



## Home to School Travel Policy for Children and Young People 5-16 years old: the Sefton Context

### Eligible Children

Under Section 508 (B) of the Education Act 1996 the Council must provide travel free of charge to and from school for eligible children of compulsory school age aged 5 to 16.

To be an eligible child, the Local Authority must establish that the child is attending a suitable qualifying school and meets the eligibility criteria below.

### Parental Preference- Choice of School

Parents and Carers have the right to say which school they would prefer their child to attend (under section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998), but this does not automatically mean that your child has a right to free travel to the school unless:

- your child is attending the nearest suitable/ qualifying school
  - meets the distance eligibility criteria below to that qualifying school
- or
- your child can be considered under the extended rights category where the eligibility criteria is widened

#### 1. Attending a Suitable/Qualifying school

A “suitable or qualifying school” will in general mean the nearest school to the child’s home with places available. The nearest school may, in some circumstances include schools within other Local Authority areas rather than a Sefton School.

#### Qualifying schools are:

- Community, foundation or voluntary schools;
- Academy schools;
- Free schools;
- City technology colleges (CTC) & City colleges for the technology of arts (CCTA);
- Non maintained special schools;
- Pupil referral units

There is no general legislative requirement for the Local Authority to provide travel for pupils to the nearest school of a particular type e.g. gender, academy, free school or faith school but Sefton Local Authority does use its discretionary powers to include the below in this travel policy.

Within Sefton, if you live in a catchment area for a Sefton school, that school will be considered as your qualifying school for the purposes of Home to School Transport and travel eligibility. Once a qualifying school is established, the national eligible distance criteria will then be applied.

If your child is attending a Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled Faith school which is of your family's own religious denomination the qualifying school in this instance, for travel support eligibility, is the school which serves the Parish where you live. In such circumstances, we may ask for independent evidence that your child is involved in the religion concerned, such as a letter from the appropriate minister of the faith concerned.

For Catholic children, Sefton Local Authority would accept the nearest Catholic High school to a child's home as a suitable / qualifying school for a child who attended a Catholic primary school.

## **2. Distance eligibility criteria from the Suitable/Qualifying school(s)**

Schedule 35B of the Act categorises eligible children as the following:

### ***Children who live beyond statutory walking distances***

All applications are assessed on an individual basis in accordance with the Policy which requires that a child must attend the nearest qualifying / suitable school for transport purposes and;

- live more than 2 miles, for a child under the age of 8, from the school using the shortest available walking route
- live more than 3 miles, for a child over the age of 8, from the school using the shortest available walking route

### ***Children who have extended rights eligibility***

A child will qualify for transport assistance under the low income criteria if they meet the criteria of attending their nearest qualifying/ suitable school and are entitled to receive free school meals or parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit.

Nearest appropriate school is:

- beyond 2 miles (for children over the age of 8 and under 11);
- between 2 and 6 miles (if aged 11-16 ) if the school is one of the three closest suitable schools
- between 2 and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).

### ***Children living within the statutory walking distance from home to their qualifying school / Unsafe route eligibility***

- Travel arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable/qualifying school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk. How Sefton assesses a route as safe/unsafe can be found below and is also included in the School Admissions Booklet- Guide for Parents.

When considering whether a route is safe, we will consider the age of the pupil and the nature of the route or alternative routes, along which he or she could reasonably be expected to walk to school, accompanied as necessary by a parent or guardian. If we consider that a child cannot use a route on their own, we will take account of whether or not there were any circumstances, which prevented it being reasonably practical for the child to be accompanied (as per below).

In the exceptional case where a child lives part of the week with different parents/carers, each with shared responsibility, the home address shall be defined as the address of the primary carer of the child who is in receipt of child benefit. The applicant may therefore be asked to produce documentary evidence of this.

### **Contracted School Buses for eligible children**

Sefton Local Authority may provide school buses for “eligible” school pupils where there is no public travel available for them to use a travel pass and/ or where the walking route to school is not considered safe. Where a school bus is provided, the Local Authority will only make provision for the bus to pick children up and drop them off at designated bus stops. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that the children are dropped off and picked up at the relevant bus stops, if appropriate, for their age.

If you live in Hightown or Ince Blundell areas, contracted school buses will be provided for primary school pupils if sufficient numbers of pupils warrant a bus:

- between Hightown, Ince Blundell and St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, Little Crosby
- between Ince Blundell, Hightown and Formby Primary Schools

### **Measuring Home to School Distances**

The distance is measured from home to the school gate nearest to home by the shortest available walking route measured using the Sefton computerised mapping system.

In order to accurately measure home to school distances, Sefton Local Authority uses a computerised measuring system called “SCANA” which incorporates Map Information and uses Local Land and Property Gazetteer data. The system uses recognised routes

known to the Local Authority at the time of measurement, which are considered suitable of being used by a child (accompanied as necessary by a parent/carer).

The Local Authority uses shortest walking route as a method of measuring distance to the nearest qualifying school in order to allocate school places and to issue travel passes to eligible children. The term 'walking route' is defined as the shortest available route on foot from the pupil's home, measured from the property's address point to the nearest school gate. It is not necessarily the nearest route by car, road or bus. Websites such as Google and AA Route Planner may give driving and walking distances, however none of these websites measures home to school distances by the definition that is used by the Local Authority.

When considering whether to pay travel costs, we will consider the age of the pupil and the nature of the route or alternative routes, along which he or she could reasonably be expected to walk to school, accompanied as necessary by a parent or guardian. If we consider that a child cannot use a route on their own, we will take account of whether or not there were any circumstances which prevented it being reasonably practical for the child to be accompanied.

However, we will normally consider a route which involves any of the following features as being suitable for a child to use if he or she is accompanied by a parent or carer:-

- Crossing any main road (for example, a dual carriageway or trunk road) where there are one or more of the following:
  - A school crossing patrol
  - A pelican crossing
  - A pedestrian crossing
  - Traffic lights
  - A pedestrian footbridge
  - A subway
- A police officer, traffic warden or other responsible adult (for example, a parent or teacher).
- As long as the road is maintained by the Local Authority; all unclassified roads (that is, roads which are not A, B or C roads) are regarded as being safe to cross even if there are none of the facilities named in 1
- The presence of a pavement in a built-up or rural area
- The presence of street lighting on a route in a built-up or rural area
- As long as the area is maintained by the Local Authority; the use of appropriate passageways which are properly paved and lit

This policy applies throughout the year as public lighting is altered to meet the changes in daylight hours

We will not normally consider a route which involves any of the following as suitable for a child to use:-

- Any pathway not maintained by the Local Authority e.g. privately owned land
- Paths on canal banks for a child of any age
- Footpaths in rural areas will not be regarded as being safe without detailed investigation
- A road system on the approach to a motorway

For children with a special educational needs, disability or mobility problem who do not have an Education Health and Care Plan and cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their qualifying school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues, will be assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular travel requirements to attend a qualifying school. Usual travel requirements (e.g. the statutory walking distances to an eligible school) would not be considered when assessing the travel needs of eligible children due to Special Educational Needs and/or disability. See also the section on School Children with Education Health and Care Plans.

### **Accompaniment**

Statutory guidance states that the general expectation is that a child will be accompanied and all applications assessed under this policy assume that all children will be accompanied by a parent or other responsible person as necessary.

In determining whether a child cannot reasonably be expected to walk for the purposes of 'special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems eligibility' or 'unsafe route eligibility', the local authority will need to consider whether the child could reasonably be expected to walk if accompanied and, if so, whether the child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child.

When considering whether a child's parent can reasonably be expected to accompany the child on the journey to school, a range of factors may need to be taken into account, such as the age of the child and whether one would ordinarily expect a child of that age to be accompanied.

### **Circumstances where a travel pass /transport would not be provided**

There is no entitlement to school travel when parents/carers choose to send their child to a school other than the nearest qualifying school or one of the qualifying schools for

families that meet the extended rights eligibility criteria. (This is except where the school in question has been recommended by the Local Authority medical advisers).

### Applying for a Free Travel Pass to School

If parents/ carers believe their child is an 'eligible child' and entitled to receive a free travel pass based on the criteria above, they should complete the application form for a travel pass for 2021-2022 which is available on the Sefton website [Home to School Transport | The Sefton Directory](#).

### School Children with Education Health and Care Plans

Children who are resident in Sefton and have an EHCP may be eligible for travel support; any application will be assessed against the eligibility criteria set out on this policy. The purpose of an EHC plan is to make special educational provision to meet the needs of the child or young person.

As outlined in the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years July 2014 Guidance for Organisations (Section 9.214) Local Authorities do not have to provide travel funding based on parental preference and chosen school.

The parents' or young person's preferred school might be further away from their home than the nearest school or college that can meet the child or young person's SEN. In such a case, the local authority can name the nearer school if it considers it appropriate for meeting the child or young person's SEN. If the parents prefer the school or college that is further away, the local authority may agree to this but will ask the parents to provide their own travel.

Not all children with an EHC plan will require travel provision. Where a young person is able to access and use the public transport network safely they will be expected to do so. Where it is established that they are unable to walk or access public transport because of their SEN, a disability or mobility problem, the parent can apply for travel assistance.

Parents/carers are required to submit an application form for travel support, available on the Sefton Local Offer Website: [Home to School Transport | The Sefton Directory](#) and an assessment of eligibility for travel will then be undertaken by the **Sefton Travel Support Team**. The assessment may take account of information already held by the local authority from health, education and social care. The assessment will also include information provided from young people and parents.

Following the assessment process, parents will be notified of the decision regarding travel support in writing. Any travel support that is approved is reviewed annually.

Travel support is provided on an annual basis and parents/carers and pupils should be involved in a discussion regarding the ongoing suitability of any existing travel arrangements during the annual review of the young person's EHC plan

Sefton Council does not provide assistance with travel to or from more than one home address. In the circumstances where a child/young person with an EHC plan has more than one home address, for example, where parent//carers are separated or where the child /young person regularly resides with other family members the parents/carers should nominate one address to be the 'main residence' from which travel eligibility will be assessed in accordance to the policy. If no address is nominated, the 'main residence' will be taken to be the address nearest to the school/ provision agreed as part of the EHC plan.

### **Eligible Children with Complex Physical or Medical Needs**

In cases of eligible pupils with high risk medical needs (who require additional funding from a number of organisations) decisions regarding travel will be informed by health, education and social care practitioners.

If a child is considered eligible for travel support Sefton will undertake an assessment and may require professionals to make recommendations based on the child's specific needs during transport to ensure safety.

### **Post 16 Students (up to the age of 25)**

The Sefton Post 16 Travel Statement which includes all the relevant travel information relating to Further Education provision in Sefton, including those post 16 students with Special Educational Needs is available from <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schooltransport>

### **The Decision to Provide Transport**

The decision to provide travel is based on the national qualifying school (s) and distance eligibility criteria listed above or the student's individual SEND. This means that Sefton Council will not take the following into account when considering home to school travel entitlement:

- Parents work or other commitments including childcare.
- Attendance by siblings at other schools.
- A journey from one educational establishment to another.
- Ad hoc visits to other schools, colleges or other establishments.
- Out of hours clubs (breakfast club, after school activities).
- To/from dental, clinical, medical or hospital appointments
- Different travel times due to detention or exclusion.

In these instances, travel arrangements will be the sole responsibility of the child/student's parent or carer.



When travel has been agreed by the Local Authority, travel will be provided between the child/young person's home address and their school. The Local Authority has no statutory duty to agree any variation to this route.

### **Types of Travel Support offered**

If young people are assessed as eligible for travel support the type of travel support offered will be based on individual assessment of the young person's individual needs and with regard to the best use of the Council's resources. For most school children, this will be in the form of a free travel pass for use on public transport, or where necessary, a contracted school bus or vehicle. For Pupils with an EHCP, travel support offered may be in the form of a Personal Travel Budget or transport in a contracted vehicle. The Local Authority may also offer Independent Travel Training (ITT) for pupils where appropriate.

### **We will consider the needs of the child and the offer will consist of a scale of options depending on that need. Options include**

- Annual Travel pass for use on public transport
- Payment of a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) for pupils who have an EHCP
- Independent Travel Training (ITT) to enable the pupil to use public transport or to travel independently.
- Contracted school bus/vehicle/taxi

Where a contracted school bus/ vehicle or taxi is provided, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the pupil is ready for collection at the agreed time and place. If necessary, they should be accompanied by a responsible person until transport arrives and collected at the agreed time. If, for any reason they are unable to attend school then parents should notify the Travel Support Team as soon as possible.

For eligible Children with an EHCP who meet the criteria, a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) can be provided to help Parents and Carers get their child to school. Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs) allow parents / carers to make flexible arrangements, monitor the quality of their child's travel directly or work with other families to achieve the best possible travel arrangements for the child and their friends.

PTB are paid in 4 payments via a prepaid card, and parent/ carers will be required to sign an agreement that outlines what the parent/carer must do and what the Council must do.

For pupils travelling in contracted vehicles there is no specific duty on the Council to provide passenger assistants. However, fulfilling a duty of care to passengers and others may involve the provision of a passenger assistant. A passenger assistant may be provided to accompany multiple pupils on a school bus provision, or where there is a young person with significant needs arising from a medical condition or a disability and where there is an exceptional need for care or supervision within a vehicle.



The decision on whether to provide a passenger assistant will be made as part of the travel assessment taking a number of factors into account. Such factors may include:

- Age and capability
- The vehicle type and size
- Medical issues
- Health and safety related issues, including risk to self or others
- The young person's mobility
- Any challenging behaviour arising from the young person's SEN
- Where a passenger has severe learning or physical difficulties, the need for continual care and supervision
- Length of journey

### **Discretionary Travel Support**

This policy has set out those eligible for travel to a qualifying school.

Sefton Local Authority may also consider paying travelling expenses in the following circumstances:

- If our medical advisers recommend the child goes to a particular school for special medical reasons
- If we have agreed to a Sefton pupil continuing to go to a Sefton school after the family has left the neighbourhood of that school.

In general, we will only accept the school the child attended before the change of address as the qualifying school if a pupil has already started in Year 6 or Year 10 or 11, and meets the statutory distance criteria, as long as the distance or time taken to travel to the school is not regarded by the Local Authority as excessive and harmful to the pupil. The child must have moved house once they have already started school in Year 6, Year 10 or 11 (not moved during the summer holidays beforehand).

We will not pay travel expenses if a parent/ carer chooses to keep their child at that school.

### **Other situations where a child travels further than the statutory distances, not covered above**

We will consider these cases on an individual basis.

These exceptional circumstances will include children attending a suitable or qualifying school with a temporary disability or illness, where medical evidence is provided.

Evidence of exceptional circumstances may be required before consideration can be given. In some circumstances the Council may also pay the travelling costs of pupils who do not fall into the national eligibility categories described above or the categories

within this policy. These cases may be short term time defined travel solutions and will be considered, approved and reviewed on an individual basis.

Discretionary support may also be considered for children looked after by Sefton Local Authority and those with further special or exceptional circumstances. To apply for Discretionary Travel, you should write to the Regulatory Services Business Support Officer at the School Admissions address below.

### **For people who live in Aintree or Melling Parish / local area of Waddicar**

There are currently local agreements for residents of Aintree & Melling parishes and the Waddicar local area which identify qualifying schools linked to catchment areas and/or the safety of walking routes for the purposes of home to school travel.

Please note that residents of these areas (those who live outside of the Deyes High School Catchment Area) are considered as resident in the catchment area for Maghull High School. This means that Maghull is considered their qualifying school for the purposes of travel (or Maricourt Catholic High School is considered as their qualifying school on the grounds of faith). In most cases the statutory distance criteria is still applied to applicants living in these areas.

### **Independent Travel Training**

Independent Travel Training (ITT) aims to give students with SEND the key skills and confidence to travel independently using public transport to and from school or college. The aims of the Team are to:

- Increase independence and use of own initiative
- Raise self confidence
- Provide greater freedom
- Develop social skills
- Open opportunities for learning and work
- Less reliance on friends and family

The service provides individuals with their own personal travel programme and assistance to learn how to travel independently. The scheme is open to young people aged between 14 - 25 years who have Special Educational Needs and or a Disability and attend a Sefton Special School, a resourced unit within a mainstream school, or Post 16 provision.

Working one to one with a travel trainer, students will be accompanied to and from school over an extended period of time until they are ready to make the journey independently.

Suitability for ITT will generally be identified as part of students annual reviews in school or college, however, students currently in receipt of school or college specialist transport who would like to learn to travel independently can also apply.

For further details telephone 0151 934 2831 or email [Ainsdale.Hope@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Ainsdale.Hope@sefton.gov.uk)

## Transport Safety

The safety of those travelling on Council contracted transport provision is of paramount concern. Sefton Council will ensure that all vehicles used meet safety standards and that any drivers and passenger assistants are in receipt of a DBS. The Local Authority also reserves the right to refuse to provide transport on a contract vehicle where a pupil's behaviour is such that it is unacceptable to the operator, any passenger assistant or other passengers. If a student is temporarily suspended from transport, parents and carers will become responsible for transporting their own children to school, for the duration of the suspension.

## Appeals, Compliments and Complaints Procedure

### Appeals

The Council operates a two stage review and appeals process relating to all applications for travel. Parents/Carers can appeal in writing within 20 working days of receiving notification of the local authority's decision not to provide travel or against the detailed arrangements for travel that have been made. If a parent/ carer is refused travel under the current policy they will be offered the right of appeal against this decision. The appeals process will automatically be included with any refusal letter they receive.

Guidance relating to the appeals process is available from the Sefton Local Offer Website [Home to School Transport | The Sefton Directory](#)

### Compliments and Complaints

At Sefton Council we want to give people the best possible service we can. We welcome feedback on our services, as it gives us the opportunity to see where we can make improvements. However, if anyone has an issue with a service they can contact the Travel Support Team on 0151 934 3399.

Alternatively, please use our online complaint, comment or compliment form. Please give us as many details as possible, including the name of the person spoken to, the date, what the issue is, and how it has happened (if applicable).

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/your-council/consultations,-complaints-feedback/compliments,-comments-and-complaints.aspx>

## Links to National Strategies and Policies

This strategy is aligned with, a number of National Strategies and Policies:-

- Home to school travel and transport guidance, statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014
- Sections 444, 508A, 508B, 508C, 508D, 509AD and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (the Act), as inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the EIA 2006)
- Regulation 5 and Part 2 of Schedule 2 to The School Information (England) Regulations 2002, as amended
- Equality Act 2010
- School Admissions Code
- European Convention on Human Rights
- The School Travel (Pupils with Dual Registration) (England) Regulations 2007
- Public Service Vehicles (Carrying Capacity) Regulations 1984
- Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years July 2014 Guidance for Organisations

## Links to Local Strategies

There are a number of local strategies and policies that link to this policy, but do not duplicate it. These include:

- Sefton Core Purpose
- Sefton 2030 Vision
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Children's and Young People Plan
- Short Breaks Statement
- Looked After and Cared for Strategy
- Child Poverty Strategy
- CYP Joint Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Adoption and Fostering Strategy
- Sefton's approach to Equality and Diversity
- Early intervention and prevention strategy
- School Attendance Strategy
- School Crossings
- School Admissions Policy
- Assisted Transport Policy
- Personal Budget Plan (Direct Payment Policy)
- Carers Strategy
- Personalisation Strategy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Air Quality

## Consultation & Engagement

The Home to School or College Travel Policy Statement will be reviewed annually and consultation will take place with interested parties if there are on any proposed changes to eligibility. Including children, young people, parents, carers & schools.

## Next Steps

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure legal compliance and to assess discretionary elements of the policy in readiness for the next academic year.

## Contact Information

Information regarding home to school and college transport can be obtained from:

**For Independent Travel Training, Travel Support (Personal Travel Budget, Travel Pass Applications and Commissioned Transport):**

Sefton Travel Support Team  
Ainsdale Hope Centre  
Sandringham Road, Ainsdale  
Southport PR8 2PJ

Email: [Soc.Transport@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Soc.Transport@sefton.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0151 934 3399

## Glossary

- The 'Authority' refers to Sefton Council;
- Catchment Area- Specific geographical area used as an admissions criterion in order to allocate places at a school.
- Compulsory school age – This is between age 5 and 16. Children may start school before their 5th birthday provided that their 5th birthday falls in the school year in which they start school.
- Denominational – This word is used to describe the religious character of a school. A denominational school is one which has a religious affiliation.
- Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) – A DBS check is an enquiry made against a police-controlled database recording offences that have been convicted. DBS checks which can be 'standard' or 'enhanced' are made for all staff employed by or on behalf of the Council where the staff concerned has any significant contact with children.
- Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) – A document setting out the education, health and care needs of a child or young person.
- Eligible pupil – A pupil is eligible for transport when they meet the criteria for the award of transport.
- Exceptional circumstances – Circumstances which exist or have arisen and could not have been foreseen, and which prevent the parent or carer from meeting their duty to ensure that their child travels to school or to a transport pick-up point. Exceptional circumstances are considered on an individual basis.
- Free transport (to school) – Free transport refers to transport for which the parent or child pays no charge or contribution.
- Subsidised transport refers to transport provided or paid for by the Council for which a parental or student contribution is charged.
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) or Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities' (LDD) - for the purposes of this policy learners with SEND or LDD includes all young people aged 16 – 18 with special Educational Needs and those aged over 19 and under 25 who have an EHCP.
- Low income family – A family whose total income allows them to qualify for free home to school transport under the criteria.
- Mainstream school or college – A school or college which is suitable for pupils or students of all abilities.

- Managed move – A managed move is a transfer of a school-age pupil from the roll of one school to that of another which is brokered by the Council and arranged and agreed by both schools.
- Medical condition or need – A permanent or temporary condition which requires medical assistance and which prevents that child or the parent making their own education transport arrangements.
- Parent or carer – A person who is the mother or father of the child in question or who has parental responsibilities for the child or who has care of the child under a formal or legal arrangement. Parental Responsibilities is defined in the 1989 Children’s Act.
- Pick up point/drop off point – A designated or recognised place from which school transport begins/ends.
- Primary stage (or age) – Education offered to children aged 5-11 years.
- Qualifying / suitable school – A school maintained by the LA or an academy that is suitable to a child's age, ability, aptitude or any SEN they may have. All schools are obliged to offer teaching across the ability range.
- Religion or belief (in context of education transport entitlement) – The main indication of a religion is that it has a clear structure and belief system. Belief is defined as a religious or philosophical belief and equates to conviction. Based upon case law, it has to be more than an opinion or idea. A belief must be genuinely held and the burden is on the parent to show that it is the real reason for their action/preference.
- Responsible Adult – A responsible adult is a person aged over 18 years who is able to accompany a child of school age to school or to a school transport pick up point. The adult must be capable of making appropriate decisions on route, particularly relating to road safety.
- Post-16’ refers to young people (over compulsory school age) aged 16-18 who are attending further education or training and where they have an EHCP, those aged over 19 and up to age 25.
- School of choice (or preference) – A school of choice or preference is used to describe a school to which a parent has elected to enrol a child. This may not be the nearest or designated school.
- School year – A school year is 190 days of teaching and must begin after the end of July in any year and end before the end of July the following year.
- Secondary stage (or age) – Education offered to children aged 11-16 years.

- Shortest Available Route – A shortest available route is the shortest route a pupil or student may travel (by foot or assisted transport) to a school, college or pick up point, without trespass, in reasonable safety. An available route is one which is capable of being used.
- Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SENDS) – A pupil or student who has learning difficulties (and/or disabilities) and needs special help.
- Suitable route (to walk to school/college or to a pick-up point) – A route is defined as suitable for a child, accompanied if necessary by a responsible adult, if it meets the criteria laid down by the Council, and may be used to get to and from school or college or a transport pick-up point.
- Temporary medical condition – A medical condition which is expected to end, but which prevents the child or the parent from making their own educational transport arrangements for a limited period.
- Walking distance – Defined for the purposes of assessing home to school or college transport as two miles at the primary stage, and three miles at the secondary and further education stage. If a pupil or student lives within the walking distance to a school or college they could attend, they will not usually qualify for transport, unless the route is unsuitable. (See suitable route).