

8. HELP WITH TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

8.1 In some cases the costs of transport for children will be met by the Council. Sometimes it will be met by TfGM. This section explains the assistance that the Council will provide and the circumstances in which assistance will be provided.

8.2 Where the Council arranges transport, this will usually be between the child's home address and school or family contact (for children who are looked after by The Council), though it may not be door-to-door. Transport may be provided to an alternative address, for example that of a childminder, if this does not incur additional budgetary cost.

8.3 Where the Council agrees to arrange transport, the transport arranged will usually be by public transport and the assistance will take the form of a bus or rail pass, but it may also be:

- A personal transport budget paid to the parents/carers;
- Provision of an escort to accompany the child or young person;
- A place in a taxi or minibus.

Personal Transport Budgets.

8.4 A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment designed to help you make arrangements which will enable you to facilitate your child accessing school. You can use the budget in any way you wish, to ensure your child attends school every day, is picked up and dropped off on time and in a fit state to learn. For example, it can help towards covering the costs of running a family car or arranging with another member of the family or friends to assist with childcare, enabling you to make the journey. The payment can also be put to use by arranging childcare for a younger sibling whilst the older sibling is taken to school in the family car. The payment is a fixed amount based on proximity and bears no relationship to the cost of a hired vehicle or the specific journey you may use when taking your child to school.

8.5 A PTB is available to children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who have been assessed as eligible to receive home to school transport. The PTB is granted at the discretion of the Local Authority and is not automatically given upon request. Parent/carers seeking to access the PTB must be found to be eligible for transport assistance before being considered for a PTB. Information on how to apply for Home to School Transport is available from the Integrated Transport Unit. They can be contacted by email at itu@tameside.gov.uk

8.6 Before granting a PTB, the Local Authority will investigate whether there is any transport currently in place that your child could be placed onto at a lower cost than providing you with a PTB. While your child's specific needs will be considered when they are assessed for free school transport eligibility and when identifying their most appropriate form of transport, PTB assessments are based solely on whether or not they are cost effective for the Local Authority.

8.7 If it is not cost effective for the Local Authority to provide you with a PTB, it will not be granted even if it is your preferred method of receiving transport assistance. Students that are eligible for free school transport but for whom a PTB is not cost effective will be allocated to the most appropriate alternative form of transport assistance instead.

Cycle Allowance

8.8 An annual allowance will normally only be paid⁵ where this is agreed between the parents and the child when a child who is eligible for help under this policy chooses to use a bicycle to travel between home and school and claims cycle allowance instead of another form of assistance.

APPENDIX 2

8.9 Cycle allowance can only be claimed at the start of the school year. Once the cycle allowance has been paid the Council will generally not make any further provision for school transport for that child during that year.

Place in a taxi or minibus

8.10 Where assistance takes the form of a place in a taxi or minibus, parents/carers may be required to take their child to a local pick-up point.

Independent Travel

8.11 Many parents/carers of children, whatever their level of need, have understandable worries about the safety of their children if they travel independently. Parents/carers of children with learning difficulties or disabilities are often concerned about their ability to stay safe, or cope with unexpected changes.

8.12 The Council will work in partnership with parents/carers, schools and colleges to promote independence for all children, including those with additional needs or disabilities, as part of the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum offer. Wherever possible, this will mean helping children and young people to learn walking or cycling routes, and how to use public transport, with or without support.

8.13 Parents/carers have a vital role in this. They can help with reinforcing the learning which happens at school. Parents know their children better than anyone else and so they will know how to prepare them for the unexpected. If parents are confident about their child's ability to be independent, their children will benefit from this and grow in confidence themselves.

8.14 For some young people with the most severe physical disabilities, accessing walking, cycling or public transport will not be a realistic long-term aim. Independence for them may come, for example, from being able to arrange their own 'Dial-a-ride' journey. Similarly, there are some young people whose parents/carers will have provided their transport throughout their time at school and college, and for whom it will be a step to independence for them to be able to travel in a taxi on their own. It will be important for these young people that their transition plan should include learning these steps towards independence as part of their general curriculum entitlement.