

Q: Why are you consulting on the Home to School travel policy now?

Councils who provide home to school travel should keep them under review. The Council is asking for people's views on its new home to school travel policy. This brings different parts of the existing policy into one place. It has been brought up to date following guidance from government to all councils last year. We hope it will be easier to understand.

Q: What are the changes that the new Home to School travel policy would bring if adopted?

The new policy talks about shifting towards more independent forms of travel (such as enabling young people to use public transport and by offering families personal travel budgets), away from school buses and taxis where this is possible. We want to promote independent travel and sustainability.

Q: Who would be impacted by the travel policy if adopted?

There will be no changes to the groups of young people who are eligible for travel assistance. Some councils don't support students aged 16-18, adult learners over 19 who have Education Health and Care plans, or pre-school age children with SEND. Hackney Council will continue to provide support for these children and students, but will expect an increased take up of independent forms of travel and will provide organised transport (buses and taxis) only where it thinks it is necessary.

Q: How will the new policy affect me?

1. My son is picked up and dropped off at our house each day by one of the school buses. Will that carry on?

Quite a lot of our passengers get on the bus at pick up points. These are a short distance from the home address. It saves time and money. There are some streets where the buses can't get down. We want to create more pick up points and children will need to make their way to them and be met there in the afternoon. But if you are unable to do that because of the child's needs we will carry on providing a door-to-door service.

2. My daughter is picked up by a taxi each morning to take her to school. She shares the taxi with two other pupils. There is a passenger assistant in the taxi as well as the driver. Will the PA still be there in future?

At the moment, passenger assistants are allocated to 90% of taxis and minibuses. The policy is that PAs should only be allocated if the individual child actually needs support. We will consult with parents and schools on the details of the PA policy and with individual parents on whether a PA is needed.

3. You say you want to see more parents taking up personal travel budgets. What if I don't want one?

If your child is eligible for free home to school travel, we will offer you a personal travel budget where it makes financial sense for the Council to do so. We can pay a family so they can take their son or daughter to and from school. And it can be a lot cheaper for the Council to do this. But, it is voluntary- you don't have to take one. We will move on and offer you another form of travel if that is the case. And if you do have a personal budget and it doesn't work for you, then you can hand it back. For post 16 students - where the Council does not have to provide free travel - we are likely to offer you a travel budget, with a seat on a bus or in a taxi only where it is necessary, not as of right.

4. Will my son be expected to carry out travel training and will we lose the seat on the bus if we say No?

No, travel training is voluntary. We are offering travel training to pupils of secondary school age who have SEND and who are entitled to home to school travel. We will discuss the benefits of travel training with parents. We can assure you that your son or daughter will not lose any travel entitlements until they are confidently able to travel independently. The programme is personalised to meet the needs of the young person. Travel training will also be our main travel offer for students with SEND who are aged 16 and over.

Q: Are you only doing this to save money?

No, we need to update our policy and produce one that is up to date and compliant. But of course we can't ignore the costs of providing home to school travel. It is one of the big financial challenges that councils up and down the country are facing. We are trying to be as efficient as we can. That is why we are promoting travel budgets and travel training. We think both are 'win-wins' for pupils and families, and the Council.

Q: How will you use the feedback provided during the consultation? Will responses influence future decisions?

Yes, we will report back to the Council's Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation. We will share the findings with schools and parents. We will act on findings and recommendations that come out of the consultation to possibly amend aspects of the policy and to shape the way we do things.

Q: Where can I find more information about what support my family and I can access?

There is a home to school travel webpage on the Council's website that sets out the overall arrangements for home to school travel and transport in Hackney and which shows you how to apply.

[Help with home to school travel | Hackney Education](#)

There is also a page on the Local Offer that provides more information on travel and transport for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Hackney and also includes application forms.

[0-25 SEND Local Offer | Family Information Service | SEND Transport - Support getting to and from school or college \(hackneylocaloffer.co.uk\)](#)