



## **Home to school travel assistance policy**

### **Reception to Year 11**

## 1. Introduction

Local Authorities have an obligation to provide free home to school transport as set out in the Education Act 1996. The policy adopted by Solihull Council has been approved by Members and complies with the legislative framework and is reviewed and updated regularly.

Our policy is to provide travel assistance for pupils who meet the criteria listed below. The travel assistance provided will be whatever the Council considers is necessary and suitable for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at school.

School admissions and travel assistance have separate policies and being offered a place at a particular school does not necessarily entitle the child to travel assistance. It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that their children attend school.

Applications will only be considered from the child's permanent home address (see 2.4) to their school. We cannot consider travel assistance to and from other addresses to suit childcare or parental work arrangements. Reasons such as parents working pattern or the fact they have children attending more than one school, on their own, will not normally be considered good reasons for a parent being unable to accompany their child.

## 2. Eligibility for travel assistance

To qualify for travel assistance the child must meet all of criteria (a) (b) and (c)

<b>a)</b>	The child must live permanently in Solihull
<b>b)</b>	The child must be attending their <b>nearest suitable school</b> (see 2.1)
<b>c)</b>	The child must be of compulsory school age. This includes all children in reception year through to year 11. Children in nursery settings and post-16 students are not considered under the terms of this policy. There is a separate policy for post-16 pupils.

**AND** either (d), (e) or (f)

<b>d)</b>	The child must live more than the <b>statutory walking distance</b> (see 2.2) from their nearest suitable school. This includes qualifying under "extended rights" (see 2.2)
<b>e)</b>	The child lives under the statutory walking distance and cannot reasonably be expected to walk to the school, even when accompanied, because of their special educational need, disability or mobility problems (subject to assessment of need)
<b>f)</b>	The child lives less than the statutory walking distance, but has no safe walking route to their suitable qualifying school

**2.1 Nearest suitable school** is taken to mean the nearest qualifying school which can be a community, foundation or voluntary school; a community or foundation special school; a non-maintained special school; a pupil referral unit; an academy; a free school; a studio school or a university technical college. For children with special

education needs, an independent school can also be a qualifying school where this is named on the Education Health and Care plan (EHCP).

**2.1.1 Nearest suitable school:** The catchment-area school will always be deemed to be a nearest suitable school for a child **without an EHCP**. If this school exceeds the statutory walking distance, the child is eligible for travel assistance. Where parents exercise parental preference to choose a different school that exceeds the statutory walking distance (2.2 below), the pupil will not qualify for travel assistance.

Your catchment school can be identified via [Online maps \(solihull.gov.uk\)](http://solihull.gov.uk).

**2.1.2 Children with an EHCP - the nearest suitable school** that can meet their needs will usually be the setting named in Section I of the EHCP. Parent/carer(s) who wish to dispute this can appeal to the SEND Tribunal - [Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal forms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

### **Parental preference – pupils with an EHCP**

If a parent chooses a school that is further away than the nearest suitable school the council will consider whether transporting the child to the parent's choice of a school further away would be compatible with the efficient use of resources (known as '*the Dudley test*'). The council will first determine the cost of the relevant travel offer to each of the two schools (the travel offer may be different for each school, for example, school A may be walkable, school B may need a bus pass). It will then decide whether the additional cost of providing travel to the parent's choice is compatible with the efficient use of resources. In doing so, it will have regard to the educational benefits and other advantages that the school will provide for the child.

If it is decided that the parent's choice is compatible with the efficient use of resources then only this school will be named on the education, health and care plan (EHCP). If it is decided that the additional cost is incompatible with the efficient use of resources, the council may name both schools in the EHCP on the condition the parents pay the cost of transport to their preferred school.

Parents who disagree that both schools are suitable and consider only their choice can meet the child's needs, or, where a parent considers that the cost including transport to their preferred school is not an inefficient use of resources have the right of appeal to the SEND Tribunal.

**2.2 Statutory walking distance, and extended rights,** to the nearest qualifying school depends on the age of the child and the financial status of the family. Extended rights refer to adjustments to the normal statutory distance on the grounds of low income:

<b>Child's age</b>	<b>Statutory walking distance</b>
Under 8	2 miles
Over 8	3 miles
Over 8 under 11 low-income family*	2 miles
Over 11 low-income family*	2-6 miles and attend one of their three nearest suitable qualifying schools

Over 11 low-income family*	2-15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief.
* Low-income family = eligible for targeted free school meals (targeted FSM)	

Statutory walking distance is a threshold which determines whether the cost of travel assistance should be met by the Council or whether it rests with the parent. It does not mean that children must walk the distance. It is the responsibility of parents who live under the qualifying distance to decide how to get their child to and from school. The distance is calculated by the Council's measuring system from the child's home via the shortest safe walking route to the main pedestrian gates of the school. The route may include unsurfaced footpaths and other pathways, as well as roads. The property and school location is provided by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). A safe walking route is not defined by parental assessment of safety. But by objective measures of the availability of a route as described in Annex 1.

The distance from an address to a particular school may change over time as the road and path network alters, and measuring software is updated. This could mean that assistance is withdrawn following review of previously eligible students and later applications for travel assistance from the same address are not given the same outcome. Provision of travel assistance to an older sibling or previous occupant of a property does not guarantee future eligibility.

### **2.3 Unsafe route eligibility**

Travel assistance will be offered to those who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their suitable qualifying school because there is no available walking route. The availability of a route would be assessed by our Sustainable Travel Team in accordance with the Council's Pedestrian Route Assessment Guidelines - Walked Routes to Schools. (Annex 1)

### **2.4 Determination of address for transport eligibility**

For pupils whose parents/carers do not live at the same address, eligibility will be assessed for the address at which the pupil spends three or more school nights (Sunday–Thursday). Travel assistance to both homes will not be provided.

Where the pupil spends an equal amount of time during the school week at both addresses and they would qualify for assisted travel to school from both addresses, the Council will normally provide assistance from one address only, and this will be the address where child benefit is paid to.

The Council may consider discretionary support where this involves a low-income family.

### **2.5 Assessment of special educational need or disability**

Applications under this criterion must be supported by professional evidence stating that the child's disability prevents him or her from making the journey safely to school, even if accompanied by a responsible adult or travelling to school

independently. For example, a letter from a paediatrician or a consultant psychologist; we will not normally accept a letter from a GP.

Evidence to support an application for travel assistance would ordinarily be supported by the professional evidence and, if appropriate, the child's education, health and care plan. Evidence of this nature will likely to be correspondence you are already in receipt of; we are not expecting you to go to the expense of obtaining new information, where suitable information already exists. Please contact us if you wish to confirm which documents you need to provide us with as part of your application.

An assessment will be carried out by our Travel Options Assessment Officer, who will consider all the evidence and whether the family has the necessary resources to transport the child themselves or use public transport.

## **2.6 Short term placements, integration, assessment, and early years placements**

Home to school transport arrangements are normally only to provide for transport at the start and end of the normal school day.

Where a child is attending alternative provision on a full-time basis as a result of exclusion or long-term placement, the local authority will consider the alternative provision as the "nearest suitable school", and travel assistance may be provided if eligibility falls within the rules in section 2 above.

For temporary placements on a part-time or within the school day basis, transport is the responsibility of the commissioner of that part-time placement (the placing school).

Integration and assessment places – where these are of limited duration, with a clear pathway to full-time attendance, the local authority will endeavour to support the arrangement at the normal start or end of the school day but cannot provide contract vehicles for non-standard start or leave times.

For early years placements, transport assistance will not be provided. Parents need to consider their ability to access the provision as part of their decision to place their child in that provision.

## **3. The Solihull offer for travel assistance**

Applicants can normally expect an outcome within 20 days of an assessment, except when the application is made to start at the beginning of a new school year, and the application is significantly (more than 20 days) in advance of the start of the new school year. During the application process travel to school remains the legal responsibility of parents.

Applicants who are eligible for travel assistance will be offered assistance based on an individual consideration of the safety of the child, the child's individual needs, and the efficient use of resources. The offer will be the most cost effective, whilst suitable for the child's needs, from this range of options:

**3.1 A bus pass or its cash equivalent.** This will be at a minimum level to secure the travel to school, for example a pass for a specific bus route. If the route from home to school is particularly complex, parents may wish to consider alternative practical options such as car sharing or cycling, then the parent may request to take the travel assistance as a cash equivalent up to the value of the specific bus route pass. The parent may also supplement, at their own expense, a specific bus route pass to become a general network pass, if they feel wider access to travel would benefit the child. Bus passes issued by us for routes commissioned by Solihull Council have no cash value.

**3.2 Independent travel training (ITT)** is an option which may be offered to pupils who need extra help to develop their skills so they can travel to and from school on their own. Solihull Council Independent Travel Trainers work on a one-to-one basis teaching young people to travel to and from school independently. Our aim is to train the majority of pupils to travel independently by the end of their Year 10. Every year all pupils receiving assistance other than a bus pass will be assessed for eligibility for independent travel training, following parental consent. We will begin the conversation about travel training your child prior to year 9, and again prior to Year 11, if ITT was not possible during Year 10.

Independent travel trainers may assess pupils to determine their eligibility for travel assistance. If the travel trainers confirm that a pupil can travel from home to school independently, we will not provide a seat on a transport vehicle or pay a personal travel budget. A bus pass or its cash equivalent will be provided if the pupil is eligible for transport assistance.

Independent travel training is an important life skill. Aligned with our Post -16 policy, we actively promote independent travel so that all young people can access their community, training and learning opportunities as well as social and leisure activities. In order to achieve this, we ensure ITT become involved as early as possible for students, wherever possible. For more information about ITT, please visit: [Solihull Independent Travel Training \(ITT\)](#), or directly apply for ITT [here](#).

**3.3 Personal travel budget.** Parents of children who qualify under criterion (e) who wish to make their own arrangements to take their child to and from school can be paid an allowance under the terms of our personal travel budget agreement (annex 2). This will usually be calculated based on the shortest driving mileage (measured on route planning software determined by the Council) of two return journeys from home to school. The HMRC recommended mileage rate will be used for the calculation. This is currently 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p per mile above 10,000 per mile. The personal travel budget is intended to cover all parental expenses relating to travel including bus/train passes, car parking fees, toll road fees, congestion and clean air zone charges, fuel, vehicle repairs/servicing, insurance, and any alternative arrangements that parent/carer may have to make if their normal travel solution is unavailable. Parents who take up an offer of a PTB, may discuss other forms of travel assistance at any time they feel this arrangement no longer suits the family.

**3.4 Transport vehicle.** Where assistance is provided by the provision of a specific vehicle, this will normally be pupils travelling together in a mini-bus, taxi or bus,

specially adapted if necessary. A guide will be provided for a vehicle or pupil when determined necessary by the Council.

It is the responsibility of the parents and the school to ensure that the guide supervising the vehicle is fully briefed about the needs of the pupil.

Pick-up and drop-off points will be at a convenient location and within a reasonable distance from home.

Home pick-up and drop-off will only be made where the Council deems it essential due to the child's significant needs.

Pick-up and drop-off are only provided at the beginning and the end of the normal school day. We do not provide travel assistance to accommodate part-time timetables, part-time induction or integration programmes, school trips, detention, clubs or any other activities which take place within the school day, before the start or after the end of the school day.

Pick-up and drop-off will only be to the child's home address. We will not pick-up or drop off at child minders, other family members or other locations to suit parent's working or other arrangements.

When a child is taken ill at school the parent and/or the school should arrange travel home.

#### **4. Notes**

- 4.1** Any offer of assistance is valid for one year only. Eligibility for travel assistance will be reviewed annually or when there is a change of circumstances. For children with an education, health and care plan this would normally take place as part of the annual review. Any changes to travel assistance following a review will be implemented from the beginning of the next school term, or sooner by mutual agreement.
- 4.2** Parents and pupils travelling on taxi transport vehicles must follow the [Code of Conduct](#). An [Easy Read](#), [PECS](#) version (alongside [Now and Next](#) resource) are also available, which have been created with support from Solihull Parent Carer Voice.
- 4.3** Travel assistance will not be provided for pupils attending other educational centres during the school day. The responsibility and funding for these travel arrangements lie with the school or other commissioner of that provision.
- 4.4** This policy only covers the child qualifying for travel assistance. The Council does not contribute towards the cost of the parent accompanying the child.
- 4.5** The Council will determine what the transport offer is (bus pass, seat on a vehicle, etc.) should a child be eligible for assistance. Even where travel assistance is provided, it remains a legal requirement for the parent to ensure the child's attendance at school.

**4.6** Travel assistance is provided with the expectation that children behave appropriately while travelling to and from school. Children are subject to their school's behaviour policy while travelling to and from school. Schools are expected to promote appropriate standards of behaviour by pupils on the journey to and from school. Head teachers are empowered to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises including behaviour on school transport.

**4.7** In the event of misbehaviour the Council reserves the right to withdraw travel assistance for a temporary period or while the case is being reassessed. In the event of more serious or repeated cases of misbehaviour the Council reserves the right to withdraw transport permanently

## **5. Change of circumstances**

**5.1** Families receiving travel assistance must notify any change of circumstances, such as change of address, change of school, or change in eligibility for low-income assistance. If the child is no longer eligible, transport assistance will be withdrawn. If the change in circumstances is notified immediately and it means the child is no longer eligible for travel assistance any unexpired portion of a bus pass may be kept.

**5.2** Those in receipt of a **personal travel budget** whose circumstances change will be required to repay the appropriate proportion of the advance payment.

**5.3** Families who move house after their child has started a school are responsible for their child's continued travel to that school, unless otherwise eligible under criteria.

## **6. Overpayment made in error or as a result of a fraudulent application**

**6.1** If it is found that we have made an overpayment of public funds to you, either due to our error, an applicant's failure to notify us of a change in circumstances, or a fraudulent application, the Council will take action to recover any amounts overpaid. This may include legal action.

## **7. Disabled Parents**

An available walking route assumes that parents accompany their children along a walking route for it to be considered safe. If the parents' disability prevents them from doing so, children may be eligible for travel assistance. In such circumstances, parents should provide independent evidence in support of their application; for example, a letter from a consultant.

## **8. Discretionary and exceptional travel assistance**

If your child is not eligible for travel assistance under the criteria in section 2, but you feel there are exceptional circumstances you can request that your case be considered by Officers. Examples of exceptional circumstances that have been successful in the past include severe short-term medical condition; family trauma/upheaval that mean the parent needs a period to resolve alternative arrangements to ensure the pupil can get to school safely. Such emergency assistance is normally offered on a short-term basis, and the parent may be required to contribute towards

the cost. The school or other teams within the Council, such as social care, will usually be consulted with in such instances where exceptional emergency assistance is required.

## **9. Appeals process**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your application and wish to challenge the Council's decision, a two-stage review and appeals process will be followed.

### **Stage 1: Review by an Officer Review Panel**

A parent/carer can request a review of the Council's decision by completing an appeal form and sending it to the education transport team within 20 working days of the date on which the parent was notified of the outcome of their application for assistance.

The appeal form should set out the reasons for your challenge to the decision, including the specific aspects of the decision with which you disagree. You can also include details of any personal and/or family circumstances which you believe should be considered when the decision is reviewed, providing supporting evidence as necessary.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal form, an officer review panel will review the original decision and send you a written notification of the outcome of their review, setting out:

- the decision reached
- how the review was conducted (including, where appropriate, the standard followed, for example by reference to Road Safety GB guidance);
- what factors were considered including, where relevant, information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process
- the rationale for the decision reached; and
- information about how you can escalate your case to the next stage of the review / appeals process.

### **Stage 2: Review by an Independent Review Panel**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage 1 appeal, you can ask for the matter to be escalated to Stage 2 of the review/appeals process by sending a written request to the education transport team within 20 working days of the date on which they received the officer review panel's decision. Stage 2 appeal documentation may be reviewed by the transport team for reconsideration if new information is provided.

Within 40 working days of receipt of your written request for the matter to be escalated to Stage 2 of the review/appeals process, an independent appeal panel will meet to consider your appeal. Whilst the members of the independent panel may include councillors and/or council officers, they will have had no prior involvement in the case (they will have played no part in either the original decision, or the decision of the officer review panel).

Please note, appeal time-frames (stage 1 and 2) are recommended but not mandatory. All appeals will be considered and completed as quickly as possible; however, some complex cases may take longer.

All documentation from a stage 1 review will be submitted to the independent panel. You can add any further information or supporting evidence that you wish. You may also request the opportunity to attend the panel meeting and make your case verbally.

Democratic Services will arrange for a panel to review the application, the process, and the outcome.

Where the independent panel considers a case and finds that the student is not eligible under the terms of the policy but, nonetheless, wishes to make an offer of travel assistance, they may set a contribution at a level that they see fit.

Within five working days of the panel meeting, you will be sent a letter detailing the outcome of your appeal. A copy of the decision will also be sent to the transport team. The decision letter will set out:

- the decision reached
- how the review was conducted
- what factors were considered including, where relevant, information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process
- the rationale for the decision reached; and
- information about your right to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Should you wish to exercise your right to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ('LGSCO'), this must be done within 12 months of the outcome of your appeal. This is not a further right of appeal as the LGSCO can only investigate complaints about maladministration. As a guide the LGSCO will usually consider whether:

- the Council's policy for providing travel assistance is objective, clear and fair
- the Council have applied their policy properly or fairly
- the Council did not take relevant information into account in reaching its decision, or took irrelevant information into account; or
- the Council delayed dealing with your application.
- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman can be contacted by phone on 0300 061 0614 or [www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint](http://www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint)

# **Pedestrian Route Assessment Guidelines - Walked Routes to Schools**

## **Introduction**

These guidelines developed by the Solihull Council Sustainable Travel Team.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to provide home to school transport for eligible children (as defined by Section 508B of the Act).

One of the categories of eligible children for whom transport must be provided is defined as children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk. This applies to children who live within statutory walking distance of their nearest suitable school (refer to section 2.2).

The legislation places a duty on local authorities to identify such routes but does not prescribe how routes should be assessed to determine their suitability.

## **Principles of the assessment process**

The assessment procedure is based on the following principles as determined by statutory guidance, the Road Safety GB guidelines and associated case law.

### **Available Routes**

The measurement of the walking distance between a child's home and school in order to determine eligibility is defined by the statutory guidance as 'the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely' and which 'may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads'. Route assessments to assess the safety of the route therefore take into account all such rights of way.

A route is deemed available if a child, accompanied as necessary can walk with reasonable safety to school. This does not mean a route would qualify as unavailable or unsafe because the parent perceives the route to be unsafe on the grounds of personal safety and security; or because of dangers which would arise if the child was unaccompanied; or because there are low level hazards – mud, puddles, leaves, unlit areas.

### **Accompaniment**

The Road Safety GB Guidelines and Case Law makes it clear that it is considered the responsibility and decision of the parent/carer to accompany a child (or arrange suitable supervision) as necessary when walking to and from school, including to and from a provided transport pick-up and set-down point. The Pedestrian Route Assessment Process therefore assumes that a child will be accompanied by a responsible parent or carer.

### **Risks**

The assessment process takes into account only the potential risk/s created by traffic, highway and topographical conditions. It does not take into account issues of personal

security as it is assumed a child will be accompanied as necessary by a responsible parent or carer. Neither does it take into account a parent's personal assessment of risk.

### **Site visits**

At least one site visit will always be undertaken during the route assessment process. Where it is necessary to undertake traffic counts or speed readings the visit/s will be undertaken at the beginning of the school day between 8am and 9am. If it is not necessary to undertake traffic counts or speed readings, a site visit may be performed at any time of day. Any sections of the route which may be of specific interest (poor visibility, footpath sections, speed limit signing and hazards) will be photographed and noted.

### **Policy**

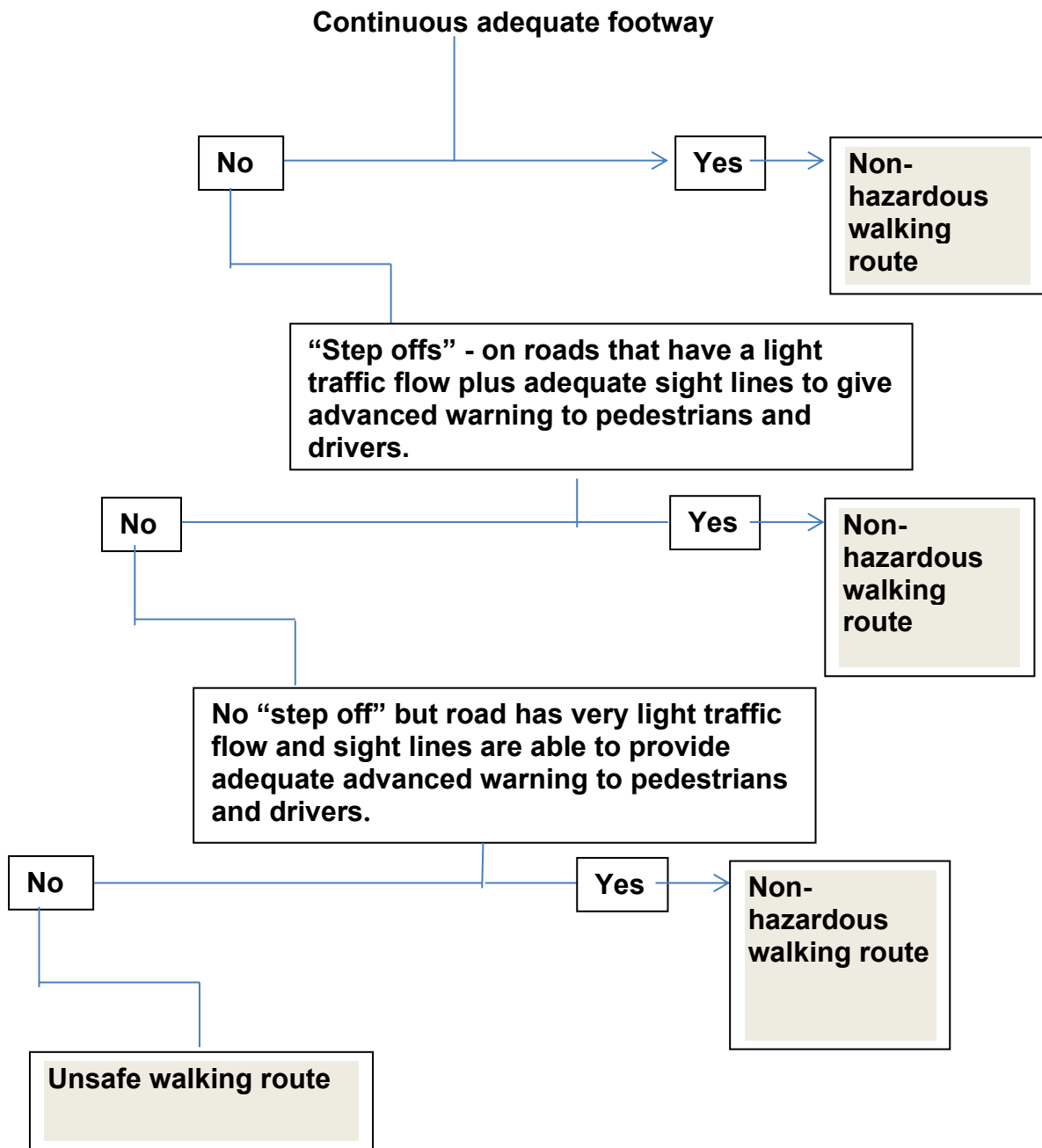
This document sets out the policy and procedure against which Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council will assess pedestrian walked routes to school. The procedure is based on guidelines issued by Road Safety GB in 2012 entitled 'Assessment of Walked Routes to Schools' and should be read in conjunction with those guidelines.

Where concerns are raised about the safety of a route which is below statutory walking distance and is:

- Between the child's home and his or her nearest or designated school
- Between the child's home and a school where she or he has been allocated a place as the nearest school with room

A pedestrian route assessment in accordance with this policy will be commissioned by Childrens Services Team and undertaken by the Sustainable Travel Team in Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

# The assessment procedure



## Assessment criteria and definitions

Adequate footway is considered to be a footway or roadside trip which is of adequate usable walking width for the circumstances. To be usable it should be clear of any overgrowth, e.g. shrubs and tree obstructing the footway.

### Traffic flows

Where there is not continuous adequate footway, it will firstly be necessary to consider traffic flows for that part of the route. Annual Averaged Daily Traffic (AADT) counts will be used where these are available and will be factored up using national growth factors to provide a current flow. Where traffic counts are not already available a manual count will be undertaken or ATC's Radarclass or Speedvisor counts will be used. Traffic counts will be undertaken at the beginning of the school day between 8am and 9am but will be performed at any time of the academic year, regardless of weather.

Passenger Car Units are calculated as follows:

3 pedal cycles	= 1 PCU
2 motorcycles	= 1 PCU
1 car	= 1 PCU
1 light goods vehicle (up to 3.5 tonnes gross weight)	= 1 PCU
1 bus/coach (over 3.5 tonnes)	= 2 PCUs
Goods vehicles (over 3.5 tonnes)	= 2 PCUs
Goods vehicles (over 7.5 tonnes/multi axle Lorries)	= 3 PCUs

Traffic counts will determine the traffic flow for each section of the route in line with the following definitions:

Heavy traffic flow: over 840 Passenger Car Units (PCUs) per hour

Medium traffic flow: 400 to 840 PCUs per hour

Light traffic flow: up to 400 PCUs per hour

Very light traffic flow: up to 120 PCUs per hour

### Step offs

Step offs are defined as providing an opportunity to step clear of the roadway onto a reasonably even and firm surface such as a roadside verge.

### Visibility/lines of sight

Routes with light traffic flow and adequate step offs, or very light traffic flow without step offs, will only be considered non-hazardous where:

- Lines of sight are sufficient for pedestrians to see oncoming vehicles and have sufficient time to safely take avoiding action.
- Lines of sight for drivers are sufficient for them to see pedestrians walking along the carriageway and have sufficient time to safely take avoiding action at the speed they are travelling.

Lines of sight for drivers are measured from a height of 1.05m and must be equal or greater to the overall minimum stopping distance for traffic at the recorded 85%ile speed of traffic on that section of the route. Visibilities will be measured at their shortest point from where a driver could see a pedestrian on a bend.

## **Speed surveys**

If recent speed surveys are available from the Councils database, they will be used to undertake an analysis. If they are not available, speed readings will be measured using a radar gun, or similar device. If this is impractical, average speed surveys will be carried out using time and distance over sections of the route.

Where traffic speeds are very low (20mph or below), the route will be presumed safe unless there are exceptional factors.

## **Crossings**

Where there is a need to cross roads, a route will only be considered non-hazardous where there is either:

- Crossing facilities (e.g. zebra, pelican or puffin crossing), pedestrian phase at traffic lights, school crossing patrol or pedestrian refuge/s;
- Or
- Sufficient gaps in the traffic flow and sight lines to allow enough opportunity to cross safely.

'Sufficient gaps' is defined as four gaps in each five minute period, based on a walking speed of 3 feet per second. A gap survey will not be considered necessary where flows are below 800 PCUs per hour, as traffic flows below this level are considered to provide sufficient gaps. If traffic flows are in excess of this, a gap survey will be undertaken.

Visibility should allow a vehicle to stop, given the 85%ile speed for traffic on that section of the route.

## **Road accident and casualty record**

The road accident record and road casualty record will be considered for all route assessments.

## **Road width**

On routes without continuous footway or verge, consideration will be given to the width of the carriageway and speed and type of traffic using the route.

## **Street lighting**

In line with the Road Safety GB guidelines, the presence or absence of street lighting is not considered to be a factor. This is because adequate sight lines and visibility are considered as part of the assessment process and it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that pedestrians are dressed and equipped appropriately for the journey and weather conditions.

## **Rural schools**

Where schools are located in rural or village locations without footway or step offs, traffic flow may exceed the 'very light' threshold at certain times of the day (such as school beginning and end times) in the immediate vicinity of the school and/or village. It would be impractical to suggest that such village or school locations are not suitable for any pedestrian use, and professional judgement will therefore be exercised and consideration given to factors such as speed limits or other road safety measures in determining the outcome of the assessment.

## **Professional judgement**

The Road Safety GB guidelines make it clear that, particularly in rural areas, the exercise of continuous professional judgement is likely to be required. No criteria can provide the answers to every situation or risk that may be encountered.

Professional judgement will be exercised in all route assessments. For example, where a route passes all criteria but there is an exceptional reason for judging the route unsuitable (e.g. unacceptable width with the proportion of HGV flow) the route may be failed on the basis of the assessors' professional judgement.

**Personal travel budget agreement for pupils aged 4-16**

This agreement is between Solihull Council and the named parent named below.

<b>Child's name</b>	
<b>School</b>	
<b>Parent's name</b>	
<b>Home address</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Phone number</b>	
<b>PTB start date</b>	

**The Council agrees to** pay the parent a personal travel budget (PTB) in recognition of the child qualifying for assistance under the terms of the Council's home to school travel assistance policy.

The Council will calculate the payment by:

- using the shortest driving distance measured by Google Maps;
- assuming two journeys per day (i.e. home to school to home, twice).
- using the number of days the child is required to attend in an academic year.
- using the HMRC approved rates for mileage - 45p for the first 10,000 miles per annum and 25p per mile for the subsequent miles per annum. You will be given a term's notice of any change to this rate.

The annual payment will be divided into three equal instalments and paid into your nominated bank account one week before the beginning of each school term.

The payment will be adjusted if attendance falls below 90%, regardless of the reason for absence. The Council cannot pay for journeys which have not been done but will allow for a reasonable level of absence. The adjustment will be made termly in arrears. This means that in the first term, the PTB will be paid in full (or part term if the PTB starts part way through the term). Average attendance for the current academic term will be collected. If this is less than 90% the PTB for the following term will be reduced by the percentage below 90%. For example, if average attendance in the 1<sup>st</sup> term is 80% the PTB for the next term will be reduced by 10%.

If the Council finds we have made an overpayment of public funds to you, for example; school closure, due to our error or a fraudulent application, or a failure to notify us of a change of circumstances, we will take action to recover the money. This may include legal action.

We reserve the right to serve 20 school days' notice of termination of this PTB agreement.

**You (the parent/applicant) agree to:**

- Be responsible for arranging your child's safe travel to and from school.
- Inform the Council immediately of any change in circumstances, for example, if the family moves house or the child leaves the school.
- Repay any proportion of PTB payment that you are not entitled to.
- Tell the Council if you no longer wish to receive the PTB. The Travel Options Assessment Officer will then review your application and circumstances.
- Tell the Council if your child is unable to attend school on a long-term basis.
- Provide bank details to enable termly BACS payment of the PTB

<b>Name of person receiving PTB</b>	
<b>Account name</b>	
<b>Bank name</b>	
<b>Sort code</b>	-- / -- / --
<b>Account number</b>	

**Personal Home to School Travel Assistance Budget**

Fill in, sign and return a copy of this agreement to enable payments to be arranged.

<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Date</b>	