

# Travel Assistance

An explanation of the types of assistance available.

## **I. Personal Travel Assistance Budget (PTAB) FAQs**

- **What is a PTAB?**

A PTAB is a sum of money paid directly to parents/carers or pupils to enable them to make travel arrangements. The amount that is received will be based on the distance travelled from home to their place of learning and the pupils need. The PTAB is not taxed and does not affect any other benefits that are received.

- **What are the benefits of having a PTAB?**

A PTAB provides freedom and flexibility for the child's family to choose the most appropriate travel arrangements for the child that best fit with their personal circumstances. Furthermore, it offers families an alternative to the traditional services that the Council can provide.

- **What can I spend my PTAB on?**

A PTAB can be spent on travel to ensure the pupil gets to and from school on time and in a way that ensures their safety. Some examples of how the PTAB could be spent are purchasing travel cards, childcare arrangements and paying an escort to help the child travel to school.

- **Will I need to show the Council how I am spending my PTAB?**

No, the Council want to keep flexibility and control with the parent/carer and will therefore keep monitoring to a minimum. However, the child's attendance will be monitored through the school's registration records. The school will also be checking that the child is arriving and leaving school on time as the school will not have arrangements to look after the child if they are arriving early or leaving late.

- **How will the PTAB be paid?**

Payments will be made from the Council into the parent/carers designated bank account in eleven monthly instalments between September and July. Bank details will need to be provided and an agreement will need to be signed, setting out the role of the parent/carer and the Council in the PTAB process.

- **Can the Council withdraw my PTAB for any reason?**

The Council could cancel the PTAB if:

- The child's attendance is unacceptable and/or they are late for school.
- The parent/carers move home and the child is no longer eligible for travel assistance.
- Safe arrangements have not been made for the child.
- Changes in circumstances means the pupil is no longer eligible for travel assistance.

## **II. Independent Travel Training FAQs**

- **What is independent travel training (ITT)?**

ITT is an interactive way for pupils to learn vital life skills to enable them to independently travel. The travel training programme covers pedestrian training and home to school travel training.

- **How does ITT work?**

Pupils are paired up with their own experienced travel trainer. The trainer will conduct full risk assessments on a safe route to school or college and then accompany the child as they travel on public transport.

On the way, they will pass on skills, hints and tips to help them get ready for making the journey on their own. The training covers:

- Safe road crossing
- Confidence in using different types of transport
- Journey planning
- Getting to know their route.
- What to do if something goes wrong
- Personal safety
- Using money, Oyster cards and tickets

As their skills develop over time, they will undertake more of the journey on their own; with the trainer shadowing to ensure knowledge has been embedded. Once they are travelling safely and completely independently, they will be signed off.

- **What are the benefits of ITT?**

Benefits for those participating in the programme:

- Feel more confident and independent
- Arrive at school better able to learn
- Can go out a lot more with their friends
- Have a better chance at finding a job
- Feel safer

### **III. Pick-Up Point (PUP) FAQs**

- **What are PUP's?**

PUP's are designated pick-up points near a pupil's home address. Pupils will be collected and dropped off by a vehicle at their pick-up point before and after school/college. It is the responsibility of the carer/parent to make suitable arrangements to ensure the safety of the pupil from the pick-up point. Parents/carers will be informed of the pick-up point and the process prior to the start of the scheme.

- **What are the benefits of using a pick-up point?**

Pick-up points provide families with a more accurate collection and drop off time allowing them to plan for any other responsibilities they may have, including taking other children to school. Furthermore, Pick-up points will reduce the number of stops and collections that a vehicle has to make resulting in significantly reduced journey time for many children.

- **Who should I contact if I have any questions about the use of pick-up points?**

If there any questions about pick-up points please contact BITU.

#### **IV. Shared/Individual Transport**

- **What is shared/individual vehicle assistance?**

Where assessed as essential, the Council may provide a vehicle to transport pupils to/from school from their home address or pick up point. Where transport vehicles are provided it will be by a suitably qualified and licensed provider working to contractual standards set by the Council. Whenever possible, pupil will travel together in buses. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those travelling on them. Each route will be planned on the basis of school start and finish times and the shortest possible route for all students travelling on a particular vehicle. Under very exceptional circumstances the Council may transport pupils in separate taxis or private hire vehicles based on the assessed needs of the student.

- **If the transport is late or does not arrive, what should I do?**

Even though every effort is made to minimise it, unexpected delays can occur. Please wait for 10 minutes after the scheduled pick up/drop off time. If the transport has still not arrived, please contact the transport provider or BITU.

- **What if my child leaves something behind on the provided transport?**

In the event of this occurring, contact BITU.

- **Who should I contact if I have any concerns regarding my child's transport?**

For any concerns regarding the transport, please contact BITU.

- **What happens in the event of adverse weather conditions?**

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

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

- **Can parents travel on the provided transport?**

Parents are not allowed to travel on school transport unless there are very special circumstances and agreement has been given by BITU.

- **How long will the vehicle wait for my child?**

Parents are expected to have their child ready and waiting to board the vehicle. If a child is not ready, or not at the agreed collection point, the vehicle will wait for a maximum of 3 minutes after the agreed pick up time and then move off. If this means the child is unable to travel on the organised vehicle, the parent/carer is then responsible for ensuring that the child gets to school on time. If the vehicle is running late for a pick-up, the crew are expected to advise parents/carers of the delay as soon as possible.