

Equality and Safety Impact Assessment



The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

Name or Brief Description of Proposal	School Travel Service Policy for Children of Compulsory School Age 2025-2026 and Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement for Young People and Young Adults to Support Education and Training 2025-2026
Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)	
<p>The School Travel Service manages the provision of travel support for children of compulsory school age and Post-16 students (young persons of sixth form age and adult learners (over the age of 19 and under the age of 25)), to support their attendance at school or at education setting. The Service works with the Council’s Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team to agree eligibility and the most suitable form of travel support, such as Independent Travel Training, Personal Travel Budgets (PTB), bus passes and transport (taxis, minibuses and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV)).</p> <p>There are currently approximately 660 mainstream children and 1,025 SEND children for whom the Council provides travel support.</p> <p>The School Travel Service manages the service delivery in accordance with the council’s School Travel Service Policy and Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement which aligns to National Statutory Guidance.</p> <p>The School Travel Service Policy and Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement sets out Southampton City Council’s approach to the operation of the School Travel Service in Southampton. It sets out the Council’s statutory requirements along with local policy, including the criteria for eligibility, the type of travel support the Council may provide and how to appeal a decision.</p> <p>The legal responsibility for ensuring a child’s attendance at school rests with the child’s parent or carer. For most children, parents and carers are</p>	

generally expected to provide travel arrangements for their child to travel to and from school.

Under the 1996 Education Act, Southampton City Council has a statutory duty to provide free of charge travel arrangements to facilitate the attendance at school of eligible children within the Council's administrative boundary. The Education Act 1996 requires that travel support is provided to children of compulsory school age who attend their nearest suitable school and:

- live more than the statutory walking distance from that school, or
- could not reasonably be expected to walk to that school because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problem, even if they were accompanied by their parent or carer, or
- would not be able to walk to that school in reasonable safety, even if they were accompanied by their parent or carer, or
- meet the 'extended rights' criteria for children from low-income households.

There is no legal requirement for local authorities to provide travel support to Early Years children.

The School Travel Service policy includes the statutory provision for children under the age of sixteen, as well as enabling applications to request travel support for exceptional circumstances.

The School Travel Service Policy and Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement also includes a statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of travel or other support to facilitate the attendance of all Post-16 persons of sixth form age and adult learners (over the age of 19 and under the age of 25) receiving education or training (including those with an Education, Health and Care plan).

There is no legal requirement for local authorities to provide travel support to Early Years children or Post-16 students. However, local authorities must adhere to the National Statutory Guidance on Post-16 travel support and the Equalities Act 2010 when developing and publishing travel policy statements for Post-16 students.

The School Travel Service Policy and Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement applies to children and students whose permanent home address is within the administrative boundaries of Southampton City Council. Children and students studying in, but not resident in, Southampton should refer to the relevant transport policies issued by the local authority in their resident area.

Summary of Impact and Issues

School Travel Service Policy for Children of Compulsory School Age 2025-

2026 and Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement for Young People and Young Adults to Support Education and Training 2025-2026 will update the current School Travel Service and Post-16 Travel Service Policy 2024-2025.

To achieve this, the following proposed changes are included:

- Update wording and terminology to improve clarity.
- Separate the Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement for Young People and Young Adults to Support Education and Training from the School Travel Policy for Children of Compulsory School Age to make two separate documents to align with national statutory guidance.
- Updated Personal Travel Budget.
- Add a post-16 travel grant option, and a contribution charge where vehicle transport is provided.
- Add that the maximum travel support provision is for attendance of 18 hours over three days for eligible post-16 students.
- Evidence requirement for post-19 travel support (that other options for travel support / funding have been explored).
- Removal of travel support eligibility post-house move where parents and Carers want their children to remain at the same school.
- Reduction in the notice period given if travel support is awarded in error.
- Removal of privilege places.
- Increase the number of suitable schools that families must list on mainstream application forms if they wish to apply for travel support.

In addition, other proposed changes as a result of consultation feedback include:

- Where transport is provided, due to the GCSE results being issued in August followed by enrolment planning, vehicle transport will be available from October to allow time to put the transport routes in place. Parents and Carers will need to make their own arrangements in September with mileage claimable.
- Include information in the School Travel Policy for Children of Compulsory School Age about decelerated children and their entitlement to travel support to year 11.

Potential Positive Impacts

The policy has been drafted to be fair and transparent and more closely aligned to National Statutory Guidance.

The wording of the policy has been reviewed to make the travel service offer clearer and ensure terminology used in the policy is consistent and in line with the way the service operates. This means the draft policies are now a more accurate reflection of the service offer.

A clear 'hierarchy' of travel support options for Post-16 students has been set out to clearly indicate to students the travel support offer and the order in which different forms of travel support will be considered, to increase transparency about the operation of the School Travel Service.

There is a stronger focus on independent travel to better support children and students' future outcomes.

An updated Personal Travel Budget offer may increase the uptake and the ability for parents or carers to be able to take their children to and from school.

Responsible Service Manager	Annamarie Hooper, Service Manager – Service Delivery and Compliance
Date	20/08/2024
Approved by Senior Manager	Pete Boustred, Head of Transport & Planning
Date	20/08/2024

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	<p>The School Travel Service impacts children of compulsory school age, post-16 students; young people of sixth form age and adult learners (up to age 25 where they are continuing on a course started before their 19th birthday).</p> <p>A change to the travel provision is proposed for Post-16 students towards a more sustainable and/or independent travel offer through a hierarchy of travel support. Students may be required to make their own travel arrangements with the support of independent travel training or by the provision of a travel grant, or required to contribute towards the cost of</p>	<p>A full public consultation for seven weeks and consultation events will take place at the start of the consultation period, including specific events for Parents/Carers and Young People and Schools and Colleges.</p> <p>Consultation events for parents/carers and young people have been arranged in conjunction with the Southampton Parent Carer Forum who will be hosting some of the events.</p> <p>Business Change Manager in place to support active</p>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	<p>the service where transport is provided.</p>	<p>engagement with parents/carers and young people to support the management of any culture shift, facilitate better communication and understanding of the impact of the changes, and to support the School Travel Service to ensure that policy changes are implemented fairly and consistently.</p> <p>Draft Policy for Post-16 students proposes that any contribution will be means tested.</p> <p>Students can be supported with independent travel training provision.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>There are approximately 1,025 children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) for whom the School Travel Service provides travel support.</p> <p>Travel support for Post-16 students; young people of sixth form age and adult learners (up to age 25 where they are continuing on a course started before their 19th birthday) with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities will be provided based on assessed need.</p> <p>A change to the travel provision is proposed for Post-16 students towards a more sustainable and/or independent travel offer through a hierarchy</p>	<p>A full public consultation for seven weeks and consultation events will take place at the start of the consultation period, including specific events for Parents/Carers and Young People and Schools and Colleges.</p> <p>Consultation events for parents/carers and young people have been arranged in conjunction with the Southampton Parent Carer Forum who will be hosting some of the events.</p> <p>Business Change Manager in place to support active engagement with</p>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	<p>of travel support. Students may be required to make their own travel arrangements with the support of independent travel training or by the provision of a travel grant, or required to contribute towards the cost of the service where transport is provided.</p>	<p>parents/carers and young people to support the management of any culture shift, facilitate better communication and understanding of the impact of the changes, and to support the School Travel Service to ensure that policy changes are implemented fairly and consistently.</p> <p>.</p> <p>Draft Policy for Post-16 students proposes that any contribution will be means tested.</p> <p>Students can be supported with independent travel training provision.</p>
Gender Reassignment	No identified impact.	N/A
Care experienced	No identified impact.	N/A
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No identified impact.	N/A
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>Where pregnancy or maternity impacts a parent or carer's ability to support their child's travel to and from school, they may be eligible for travel support under the Exceptional Circumstances criteria.</p>	N/A – no change to policy or provision.
Race	No identified impact.	N/A
Religion or Belief	<p>Children will be eligible for free school travel under 'extended rights' where a pupil is entitled to free school meals, the school</p>	N/A – no change to policy or provision.

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	is between 2 and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).	
Sex	No identified impact.	N/A
Sexual Orientation	No identified impact.	N/A
Community Safety	No identified impact.	N/A
Poverty	<p>According to the Department for Work and Pensions, in 2021/22, 25% of children aged under 16 were living in relative low-income families in Southampton. This is significantly higher than the national average.</p> <p>In the UK, children from lower income families are 50% less likely to do as well at school as their classmates.</p> <p>Travel support for Post-16 students; young people of sixth form age and adult learners (up to age 25 where they are continuing on a course started before their 19th birthday) with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities will be provided based on assessed need.</p> <p>A change to the travel provision is proposed for Post-16 students towards a more sustainable and/or independent travel offer through a hierarchy of travel support. Students may be required to make their own travel arrangements with the support of independent travel training or by the provision of a travel grant, or required to</p>	<p>Children may be entitled to free travel support if they have a low family income and they are entitled to free school meals or get the maximum Working Tax Credit and one of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are aged 8 to 11, go to their nearest suitable school and it is at least 2 miles away from their home address. • they are aged 11 to 16 and go to a school 2 to 6 miles away - if it is one of their 3 nearest suitable schools from their home address. • they are aged 11 to 16 and go to a school between 2 to 15 miles from their home address and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief. <p>A full public consultation for seven weeks and consultation events will</p>

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	<p>contribute towards the cost of the service where transport is provided.</p>	<p>take place at the start of the consultation period, including specific events for Parents/Carers and Young People and Schools and Colleges.</p> <p>Consultation events for parents/carers and young people have been arranged in conjunction with the Southampton Parent Carer Forum who will be hosting some of the events.</p> <p>Business Change Manager in place to support active engagement with parents/carers and young people, facilitating better communication and understanding of the impact of the changes.</p> <p>Draft Policy Statement for Post-16 students proposes that any contribution will be means tested.</p> <p>Students can be supported with independent travel training provision.</p>
Health & Wellbeing	No identified impact.	N/A
Other Significant Impacts	No identified impacts.	N/A