

**PIERVIEW ACADEMY,
ST JAMES HOUSE,
6-8 OVERCLIFFE,
GRAVESEND, DA11 0HJ**

**School Travel Plan
Prepared on behalf of Tower Group
Developments Ltd**

August 2025

In consultation with



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Project: Pierview Academy, St James House, 6-8 Overcliffe, Gravesend, DA11 0HJ

Landlord: Tower Group Developments Ltd

Document: School Travel Plan

Crosby TP ref: PC/P25078 STP

Issue date: 27 August 2025

Status: 2nd issue

Authorised by: PC

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CONTENTS

1	Introduction.....	2
2	Site and Accessibility Audit.....	6
3	School Activity	11
4	Aims and Objectives.....	13
5	Travel Plan Measures and Initiatives	14
6	Targets and Monitoring.....	17
7	Action Plan.....	19

Figures

Figure 2.1: Site Location

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Pierview Academy is an independent Special Educational Needs (SEN) school which focuses on small class sizes, tailored learning plans and individual support for young people aged between 11 and 25, ensuring that pupils receive both academic and emotional guidance suited to their needs.
- 1.2** In July 2025, Gravesham Borough Council granted Prior Approval to Tower Group Developments Ltd (planning reference 20250293) for the change of use of St James House, 6-8 Overcliffe, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0HJ from commercial space (use class E) to state-funded school (use class F1).
- 1.3** Pierview Academy intend to occupy St James House and in doing so, increase their overall capacity, enhance the learning environment and provide improved support to pupils.
- 1.4** The Prior Approval application was approved subject to four planning conditions, of which condition 2 states:-

“The development shall not be brought into use until a Travel Plan, to reduce dependency on the private car, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall include objectives and modal-split targets, a programme of implementation and provision for monitoring, review and improvement. Thereafter, the Travel Plan shall be put into action and adhered to throughout the life of the development, or that of the Travel Plan itself, whichever is the shorter. Reason: In order to encourage options for sustainable travel in accordance with Policies CS11 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).”

What is a School Travel Plan?

- 1.5** A School Travel Plan is a strategy with an agreed action plan, targets and measures, which is designed to reduce the amount and impact of traffic and travel generated by a school.
- 1.6** A School Travel Plan will normally include measures and initiatives that should improve travel choice, reduce reliance on the car and reduce the environmental impact of travel. School Travel Plans should incorporate information about the travel options available and aim to make public transport, car sharing, walking and cycling more attractive. Where possible, Travel Plans should also aim to discourage sole occupancy private car journeys.
- 1.7** In addition to identifying measures and initiatives that can be used to encourage staff and students to make smarter travel choices, a Travel Plan should also set out achievable targets against which its success can be measured and define the process by which it will be implemented, managed, monitored and reviewed.

Policy Background

- 1.8** School Travel Plans are an important element of government policy which aims to increase personal travel choice by improving infrastructure and services that enable more people to use sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- 1.9** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in March 2012 and most recently updated in December 2024. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions and sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development that recognises the importance of transport policies in facilitating sustainable development, and that planning decisions should have regard to local circumstances.

- 1.10** In relation to promoting sustainable travel, paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development.
- 1.11** Paragraph 115 states that in assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up, given the type of development and its location.
- 1.12** The NPPF goes on to say at paragraph 118 that *“All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed”*
- 1.13** The NPPF Planning Practice Guidance entitled *‘Travel plans, transport assessments and statements in decision-taking’* provides advice on when a Travel Plan will be needed for a proposed development. Such considerations include the scale of the development and its potential for additional trip generation as well as the cumulative impacts of multiple developments within a particular area.
- 1.14** Policy CS11 (Transport) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) states that *“new developments should mitigate their impact on the highway and public transport networks as required. As appropriate, transport assessments and travel plans should be provided and implemented to ensure the delivery of travel choice and sustainable opportunities for travel”*.
- 1.15** Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy states that new development will encourage *inter alia* sustainable travel and be designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all members of the community.

- 1.16** This School Travel Plan, including its objectives and targets, has been developed in close conjunction with Tower Group Developments Ltd (the ‘Applicant’ and ‘Landlord’) and Pierview Academy who clearly have a vested interest in the success of the STP whilst fully understanding the opportunities and constraints of travelling to a SEN school.

School Travel Plan Working Party

- 1.17** The School Travel Plan working party members are:

- David Cowell - Pierview Academy Chair of Executive Board
- Naggii Lamjav - Pierview Academy Finance Director
- Verity Robinson – Pierview Academy Pastoral Lead
- Cam Javed - Tower Group Developments Ltd
- Hector Melendez - Planning Consultant
- Paul Crosby - Transport Consultant

2 SITE AND ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

Site Audit

- 2.1** The site fronts onto the A226 Overcliffe which is a main arterial route through Gravesend. The context of the site in relation to the local transport network and Gravesend town centre is shown in **Figure 2.1** below.



Figure 2.1: Site Location

- 2.2** The site comprises St James House which is a three-storey former office building with lower ground floor level and associated surface level car parking to the front and rear of the building. The main points of access to the school are from the A226 Overcliffe frontage by way of two dropped kerb crossover accesses. The western access leads to an area of unmarked hardstanding at the front of the building which operates as a drop-off and pick-up area, enabling pupils to be dropped off and picked up quickly and efficiently from the main building frontage.
- 2.3** The eastern access provides an egress for the frontage drop-off and pick-up area as well as providing a two-way access to the rear car parking area via a gated undercroft access. The rear car park provides secure car parking for staff and visitors as well as providing a secure and sheltered cycle parking area for staff and visitors.
- 2.4** Within the vicinity of the school, Overcliffe is a two-way single carriageway road with footways and street lighting along both sides. To the west of the school, on-street parking bays are provided along the northern (eastbound) side of the road which provide pay and display parking between 8am-630pm on Mondays to Saturdays. To the east of the school, the eastbound lane tapers to provide an eastbound bus lane and bus stop as part of a signalised bus priority gate in advance of the left-in/left-out priority junction with Stuart Road.
- 2.5** A bus stop is located directly in front of the school between the two school accesses. Elsewhere parking and waiting along Overcliffe is comprehensively controlled with double yellow line restrictions.

Non-car Accessibility Audit

Walking and Cycling

- 2.6** By virtue of the school's proximity to Gravesend town centre, the surrounding area comprises an established mix of retail, commercial and residential development. The pedestrianised section of New Road, which forms a key part of the primary retail core of Gravesend is located a direct 250 metre (4 minutes) walk to the east of the site and offers numerous retail and food-retail opportunities. Gravesend train station is a 400 metre walk distance (6 minutes) to the southeast of the site.
- 2.7** As the school is located within an established built-up, edge of town centre location there is extensive pedestrian infrastructure in the locality, with roads and footways well-lit and of generally a good standard. There are few barriers to walking, with footways, dropped kerbs and street lighting along Overcliffe connecting to the wider pedestrian network.
- 2.8** The width of the footway along Overcliffe in the vicinity of the school frontage is a comfortable 2.0 metres. The footway opposite is 3.0 metres in width. For pedestrians routing from the site to the east towards the town centre, the footway continues to the New Road/Darnley Road/Bath Street signalised junction, where at-grade, signalised crossings across all arms are provided.
- 2.9** From this signalised junction, New Road continues for a further 50 metres to the town centre Pedestrian Zone where vehicular access is prohibited between 10am-8pm.
- 2.10** Up-to-date information regarding cycle routes and maps for Gravesend can be obtained from Explore Kent via the following link:

<https://explorekent.org/activities/explore-gravesend-town-walking-cycling-routes/>

Public Transport

- 2.11** The nearest bus stop (Stop 'Y') to the site is located on Overcliffe directly in front of the school for westbound services. The bus stop (Stop 'X') for eastbound services is located on the opposite side of Overcliffe, within a 60 metre walk distance of the site.
- 2.12** Further bus stops (Stops 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F' and 'G') within a 260-400 metre walk distance of the site are located on Garrick Street, Barrack Row and Clive Road to the north of Gravesend railway station.
- 2.13** There are some 21 frequent and regular daily bus services that are accessible from these nearby bus stops including the 'AZ fastrack', 'B fastrack' services and 480 service which each operate with 5-6 services per hour.
- 2.14** The local bus services provide routes to many key local destinations including Dartford, Temple Hill, Swanscombe, Castle Hill, Chatham, Higham, Rochester, Bluewater, Northfleet, Ash Green, Meopham, Cliffe, Ebbsfleet Valley and Ebbsfleet International Rail Station.
- 2.15** Up-to-date information regarding bus services within Gravesend, including timetables and maps, can be found at the following links:

<https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/kent-and-surrey/bus-travel-in-gravesend>

<https://www.kent-fastrack.co.uk/services>
- 2.16** Gravesend railway station is accessible within a 400 metre walk distance to the southeast of the site. Services are operated by Southeastern and Thameslink. During a typical off-peak weekday hour, there are 2 services to London St Pancras, 2 services to London Charing Cross, 2 services to London Victoria, 2 services to Luton, 2 services to Rainham and one service each to Faversham and Ramsgate. The typical journey times to London St Pancras, London Charing Cross and London Victoria are 23 minutes, 62 minutes and 65 minutes respectively.

2.17 The latest information outlining rail services from Gravesend railway station can be found at:

<https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/travel-information/station-information/stations/gravesend>

<https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/gravesend/>

3 SCHOOL ACTIVITY

- 3.1** Pierview Academy will create a well-organised and functional school facility suitable for accommodating the specific needs of pupils with SEN. The internal alterations to the building have included adapting the existing office layout into a functional educational facility including classrooms, science laboratory, administrative offices, dining room, welfare facilities and support spaces
- 3.2** Initially, the school will start off the 2026 academic year with 5-10 pupils only and 6-8 FTE staff members. Within 5 years of first occupation, the expectancy is that the school will accommodate circa 30 pupils and 12 FTE staff members.
- 3.3** Core school hours are 09:00hrs to 15:00hrs, Monday to Friday. Pupils will arrive between 08:30hrs-09:00hrs and depart between 15:00hrs-15:30hrs. Staff will arrive from 08:00hrs and leave between 16:00hrs-18:00hrs.
- 3.4** Due to the needs of SEN pupils, all pupils arrive by taxi or local authority transport schemes with the possibility that some local pupils may walk assisted or be driven by parents/carers. SEN pupils will travel by taxi with DBS-checked carers for the entirety of the journey, with the carer either being collected first or accompanying the pupil already at the point of collection depending on the risk assessment of the pupil. For safeguarding and security reasons, pupils are to be escorted from the taxis/cars to their classrooms by school support staff. School staff will coordinate pupil pick up and drop offs, wearing hi-vis jackets and directing taxi movements in and out of the area, using walkie-talkies to communicate student arrivals, which will make the arrival and departure times smooth and efficient
- 3.5** The catchment area for pupils will be Gravesend, Medway Kent and potentially Essex. SEN schools generally have a larger catchment area than conventional schools due to their specialist nature. For this reason, journeys can be less predictable, with a larger morning arrival and afternoon departure window required.

- 3.6** Consequently, taxi/car drop-off activity will place over a 30 minute period in the morning in the lead up to the start of the school day at 09:00hrs. Pick-up activity will generally occur over a 30 minute period with taxis and carers starting to arrive from 14:45hrs and tailing off by 15:15hrs.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 This document provides a strategy to effectively manage the way staff, pupils and visitors travel to and from the school, promoting and encouraging sustainable modes of transport and discouraging private car journeys where possible. The aim of the School Travel Plan is to ensure there is no congestion in and around the school entrance by primarily reducing the number of car journeys by encouraging pupils and staff to choose alternative forms of transport to travel where possible.

4.2 The objectives of School Travel Plan are to:

- Encourage car sharing by parents/pupils and staff wherever possible to reduce the number of car trips to school;
- Increase the number of staff who walk or cycle;
- Ensure no congestion around the school accesses at the start and end of the school day, to reduce the potential for accidents; and
- Build links within the whole school community and give pupils and carers the opportunity to have a say in decisions that affect their journey to and from school.

4.3 By meeting these objectives, the travel plan will bring about the following benefits:

- Improved personal health by reducing reliance on the private car;
- Reduced air and noise pollution in the local area;
- Reduced congestion in the vicinity of the school; and
- Increased travel choice, allowing the staff, pupils, carers and visitors more access by different modes of transport.

4.4 It is intended that these objectives will be met by identifying and implementing measures that provide users with access to non-car travel choices.

5 TRAVEL PLAN MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

Awareness and Engagement

- 5.1** A key element of a successful School Travel Plan is making sure that pupils, parents and staff understand the aims and objectives and are involved in the process. With this in mind, the school will implement the following measures which are specifically designed to raise awareness of and encourage engagement with the School Travel Plan.

Appoint a Travel Plan Coordinator

- 5.2** Pierview Academy has appointed a Travel Plan Coordinator from existing staff members and governors, who is responsible for the day to day running of the Travel Plan and forms a point of contact for pupils, staff, parents, carers and council officers.
- 5.3** As the person needs to operate, and to be seen to operate, with a degree of authority, the TPC is a senior member of Pierview Academy.
- 5.4** The following individual is presently appointed to take on the responsibility for the School Travel Plan including its implementation, monitoring and progress reporting:-
- Name: Verity Robinson
- Position: Pastoral Lead
- Contact Details: verity.robinson@alpschools.org
- 5.5** The TPC shall provide personal travel planning assistance to any members of the school community that may require it. This may include referring to use of the following travel planning websites:-
- [AA route planner](#) (for car journey planning)
 - [Cyclestreets](#) (for cycle journey planning)

- [Google maps](#) (for public transport and car journey planning)
- [National Rail enquiries](#) (for train journey planning)
- [RAC route planner](#) (for car journey planning)
- [Traveline](#) (for public transport)
- [walkit.com](#) (for planning walks)

Promoting Active Travel

- 5.6** In order to promote active travel, the school will establish a dedicated 'green' travel noticeboard in reception.
- 5.7** The noticeboard will be used to advertise safe walking and cycling routes recommended by staff and students and to advertise local bus services, including up to date timetable and route maps. To increase awareness and encourage ownership of the School Travel Plan, pupils will be encouraged to contribute towards the notice board.
- 5.8** Once the school is operating at capacity or at Year 5 of occupation, whichever is the sooner, the school will assess the feasibility of operating a school minibus for the purposes of transporting pupils to and from the school at the beginning and end of the school day.
- 5.9** Additional 'hard' measures have already been incorporated into the school including long-stay cycle parking, accompanied by lockers, showers and changing facilities for staff.

Marketing and Publicity

- 5.10** Regular marketing and promotion of the School Travel Plan is required to ensure that parents, pupils, carers and staff are aware of the aims of objectives of the School Travel Plan and the measures that are being put in place to achieve them.

- 5.11** Regular correspondence/newsletters will be provided by the TPC to keep pupils, parents, carers and staff aware of the School Travel Plan aims and objectives and to alert them to upcoming events.

Cycle Forum

- 5.12** The TPC will look to establish a cycle forum to promote cycling to/from the school and provide advice and support to new cyclists, with a particular focus on staff. The forum will also provide a medium for raising issues facing cyclists on their journey to and from school and will enable the coordinated development of measures and initiatives to promote cycle use.

Liaison with Local Authorities

- 5.13** The TPC will liaise with the local planning and highway authorities to discuss the School Travel Plan progress, as well as to discuss ensuring the network of pedestrian and cycle routes that link to the school site remain fit for purpose and to explore possibilities for improving accessibility and road safety on the journey to and from school where appropriate.

6 TARGETS AND MONITORING

6.1 Targets should typically relate to the scale of the problems identified, the scope for tackling the problems and the resources that are likely to be available to deliver the School Travel Plan. With this in mind, targets should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).

6.2 As explained at the outset, Pierview Academy is a relatively small scale Special Educational Needs school which focuses on small class sizes (up to 6 learners per class), tailored learning plans and individual support for young people.

6.3 By virtue of the specialist nature of the school, pupils will travel from a wide catchment area from across Gravesend, Medway and Kent. All pupils are expected to travel by car/taxi with the vast majority (circa 80%) travelling by pre-arranged taxis accompanied by carers which are provided and managed by the local authority. It is therefore not possible to set realistic targets for the change of mode for pupils.

6.4 Based upon the likely vehicle trip movements that were set out within the Transport Statement that accompanied the approved planning application, the following typical school weekday activity for when the school is fully operational at Year 5 will be as follows:

Time (hrs)	No. of People	Description	Transport	Arriving or Leaving
07:30-08:00	12	Staff	12 cars maximum	Arriving
08:30-09:00	30	Pupils	30 taxis/cars maximum	Arriving & Leaving
09:00-14:30	1-3	Occasional Deliveries throughout the day	3 vans	Arriving & Leaving
14:45-15:30	30	Pupils	30 taxis/cars maximum	Arriving & Leaving
16:00-18:00	12	Staff	12 cars maximum	Leaving

Table 6.1: Summary of Typical School Weekday Movements

- 6.5** Assuming that each taxi/car dropping off or picking up equates to an arrival and departure, evidently there will be a maximum peak of 60 movements during the peak periods. In total, over the course of a typical school day, Table 6.1 indicates that there would be up to some 75 vehicle arrivals and 75 vehicle departures per day, i.e. 150 vehicle movements.
- 6.6** The school day will finish at 15:00hrs. Pupil pick-ups will be staggered between 15:00-15:30hrs, with 5-minute slots pre-arranged for up to six taxis/cars at a time, with any taxis arriving early able to enter the site from 14:45hrs. This method of control will ensure taxis and cars arrive steadily during the pick-up time, minimising any peak impacts on the adjacent highway network.
- 6.7** Whilst realistic targets are unable to be set for pupils, the TPC will explore the potential for pupils to taxi-share where possible. DBS-checked carers are able to assist up to two SEN pupils within the back of a taxi. The TPC will liaise regularly with the local authority transport schemes to ensure that opportunities for transport-sharing are taken up in order to reduce the number of vehicles entering and leaving the school site.
- 6.8** Table 6.1 indicates a maximum of 12 staff arrivals and departures by car. This School Travel Plan contains aims and objectives to encourage staff to travel by non-car modes, in particular walking and cycling. However, due to the low staff numbers, any targets would not be measurable, with one movement effectively equating to more than 4% of the modal share.

7 ACTION PLAN

7.1 The following table summarises the timescales and responsibilities for the implementation and monitoring of the School Travel Plan measures.

Theme/Objective	Measure	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Travel Plan Management – Encourage travel by sustainable modes	Travel Plan Coordinator (TPC)	Appoint TPC.	Prior to first occupation of the school. ACHIEVED.	PA
	Minibus	Assess feasibility of using school minibus for pupil journeys to and from school.	Upon full occupation or at Year 5, whichever soonest.	PA/TPC
	Local Authority Liaison	Liaise with the local planning and highway authorities to discuss School Travel Plan progress and explore opportunities for improving accessibility.	Annually.	TPC
	Local Authority Transport Schemes	Liaise with local authority transport scheme to ensure opportunities for transport sharing are taken up.	Annually	TPC
Promotion / Marketing – Raise awareness of active travel	Noticeboard	Install 'green' travel noticeboard in entrance and populate with travel information.	Within 3 months of occupation.	TPC
	Personalised Travel Planning	Provide personal travel planning to school users.	Ongoing to Year 5.	TPC
	Newsletters	Distribute newsletters to maintain awareness of the School Travel Plan.	Annually at the beginning of each academic year	TPC
Walking and Cycling – Encourage travel	On-site Cycle Parking	Provide and install secure on-site cycle parking spaces.	Prior to first occupation of the school.	TGD
	Walk and Cycle Promotion	Populate 'green' travel noticeboard with relevant information.	Review and update every term.	TPC
	On-site Facilities	Provide locker, showers and changing facilities for staff.	Prior to first occupation of the school.	TGD
	Cycle Forum	Establish staff cycle forum to meet to promote cycle use.	Within 3 months of occupation and then termly.	TPC
Public Transport – Maintain awareness	Public Transport Information	Populate 'green' travel noticeboard with relevant information including relevant maps and timetables.	Review and update every term.	TPC
Key: TGD = Tower Group Developments / PA = Pierview Academy / TPC = Travel Plan Coordinator				

Table 7.1: Action Plan

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