

North Somerset Council Home to School Travel Policy: Post 16 Mainstream 2021 - 22

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1.0 Introduction

This is one of a suite of North Somerset policies for students applying for travel support. The policy is based on the [Statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education](#). It sets out the travel assistance North Somerset Council will provide for students of sixth form age within a mainstream setting. 'Sixth form age' refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 (who have started a course before their 19th birthday).

There are separate policy documents for Post 16 SEND, mainstream and SEND students of compulsory school age (aged 5-16) which can be found on the Council website [here](#).

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support. However local authorities do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport (or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make) to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

All young people carrying on their education **post 16 must apply for travel support on an annual basis** in all circumstances. Travel support will not be awarded until this process has concluded. Applications for Post 16 travel can be found here:

<https://forms.n-somerset.gov.uk/ad/form/htstapplication#/1>

2.0 Aims and Objectives

The aim(s) of the policy are to outline:

- The different types of support available and who provides it
- How to apply for travel assistance
- How to appeal a transport decision

North Somerset Council continues to support Post 16 further education to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to access education, employment, training and essential services across the county. As such, most young people are able to access Post 16 provision without requiring additional transport support. However, we recognise that the rural nature of some parts of the county can require young people to travel outside of their immediate community to access further education opportunities.

This travel policy statement therefore applies to students aged 16-19 who attend their **nearest education establishment** (or provider) that provides the elected course.

North Somerset Council's objective is to determine how travel support is provided to those aged 16 and above. The council support the Government initiative to promote sustainable travel such as walking, cycling and use of public transport.

3.0 Transport and Travel Assistance

There are a range of options for support available to young people and their carers to support their travel and support and enable their continuing education and training. The following sections provide guidance on what is available:

3.1 Concessionary tickets for young people

Young people (aged 16-21) and students (of any age in full time education) can get up to 30% discount on all bus tickets across West of England (including Bristol, Bath, Weston-Super-Mare and Wells) with First Bus. There are also railcards available for discounted rail travel for students aged between 16 - 25. Within this Travel Policy statement examples of other concessionary schemes that are available from bus companies and those provided by schools

and colleges are provided. Students will be expected to purchase concessionary tickets themselves, North Somerset Council do not manage this scheme.

3.2 The 16 – 19-Year-Old Bursary

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/ search for post 16 bursaries. There are two main types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

a) Vulnerable Groups Bursary

A vulnerable groups bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young participating on study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks should be paid a pro-rata amount in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:

- in care
- care leavers
- in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income support, in their own right
- in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals books and equipment

b) Discretionary Bursaries

Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment to be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2021 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2021 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2021 and continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or the local authority

3.3 Young Parents/Care to Learn (C2L)

C2L provides funding for childcare to help young parents (defined as those aged under 20) continue in education after the birth of a child. The scheme provides funding for childcare whilst the young parent is engaged in a study programme and is not able to provide care for their child. It can also help the young parent with any additional travel costs involved in taking the child to the childcare provider. C2L provides funding for childcare whilst young parents are on work placements or industry placements, where these are a defined part of the study programme.

Further information and to apply for the scheme, information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-to-learn-guide-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

4.0 Local Authority Support for Learners

4.1 Who is eligible for support with travel?

The Local Authority will consider travel support for students who meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Students are under 19 on 31st August immediately preceding the start of the academic year
- Students who attend their nearest education establishment (or provider) that provides the elected course.
- Students with a current statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
- Students who reside outside of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)
- Students are studying a full-time course
- Students who are enrolled a course which qualifies under the definition of 'Qualifying Education or Training'. and provide satisfactory evidence to the LA:
- That the applicants have applied to their school or college for financial assistance (Bursary), with details of the level of support offered.

The Local authority will consider individual applications where or medical or physical difficulties, mean they are unable to walk the distance of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)

Students who are completing a course funded by North Somerset Council (using the high needs top-up funding available for the individual) will continue to receive support until the end of the academic year in which they reach 25 years of age.

5.0 What does Local Authority Support look like?

The nature and mode of travel support will be determined by the Local Authority and will be one that is consistent with the Local Authority's duty to secure value for money. There will be a presumption in favour of shared travel arrangements.

In cases where the Local Authority agrees assistance, it will be for a "main road" type of service, unless otherwise agreed. Parents will be expected to make their own arrangements for transport to a specified pick up point. Transport assistance will not necessarily be for a door to door service.

Any assistance offered will be to the school/college start and finish times, based on one inward and one outward journey each day. Travel assistance will not be tailored to meet individual timetables, i.e. where contract vehicle timetables are not in line with that of the student. In such circumstance's parents are expected to make suitable adjustments to travel arrangements.

Where there is no statutory duty to do so, the Authority will not provide a Passenger Assistant where this a requirement to meet individual need. Where Passenger Assistants are travelling as part of shared travel arrangements, the Authority will consider sharing this resource where the wider needs of the service continue to be met.

Where the journey time is lengthy or requires changes of vehicle as a result of the course chosen by the student, (whilst assistance may still be offered), the parent will be responsible for managing that journey.

6.0 What transport support will the Local Authority provide for mainstream Post 16 learners?

6.1 Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS)

Where usual methods of travel are not possible due to the distance involved and the absence of suitable public transport alternatives, learners will have the option of purchasing a pass to use on a school bus contracted by the council (subject to a seat being available) under the council's Vacant Seat Scheme.

Priority on school buses contracted by the council will be given to children aged under 16 for whom the council has a statutory duty to provide free travel assistance. Post 16 learners can then purchase passes for seats that have not been allocated, with priority given to those without any alternative way of travelling to the school.

Passes allow the learner to access one journey each way, at the start and end of the school day. As this is not a subsidised scheme, learners will need to pay the full rate (as published) for this pass on an annual basis. Details concerning the VSPS scheme together with the application form can be found on our [website](#).

6.2 Sustainable Travel

Services that are not controlled by the council are operated by the operator directly. Daily prices may therefore vary for those routes and are to be approached directly for the use of their services. Details of operators can be located within 'Useful contacts' of this policy.

[Sustrans](#) is the leading sustainable transport charity that provides practical advice for parents and young people to increase confidence in walking and cycling.

6.3 Special consideration of vulnerable mainstream Post 16 learners:

The council is committed to 'focussing its' limited funds where the need is greatest and where it will make the biggest difference. Discretionary priority will therefore be given to the most vulnerable in the community whose individual circumstances warrant special consideration on top of the usual arrangements made by the council. Discretionary subsidised assistance will only be considered for those learners who can demonstrate that they cannot access any post 16 education without additional financial help from the council. This will include learners who:

- are unable to access education unsupported (i.e. their family income is such that even with the bursary they cannot afford the cost of transport);
- are young parents;
- have exceptional individual circumstances (i.e. for vulnerable or socially excluded young people)

In all cases the learner must be studying on a full-time basis (over 540 guided learning hours for the academic year) and not have a public service provider less than 3 miles from their home address (measured by the shortest available pedestrian route) which they could access. All discretionary applications will be considered when made in writing and accompanied with the relevant supporting information. Parents, carers and students have the responsibility to disclose any information which may influence the travel support provided.

7.0 Local Authority support in other circumstances

Consideration will be given for students who:

- Have a temporary disability or illness which means they cannot attend education via their usual method

- Have wider family circumstances such as parental disability, which prevents their ability to access education
- Have medical or physical difficulties, which means they are unable to walk the distance of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)
- Have demonstrated vulnerability or socially exclusion that impacts directly on their ability to study a full-time course.

All discretionary applications will be considered when made in writing and accompanied with the relevant supporting information. Parents, carers and students have the responsibility to disclose any information which may influence the travel support provided.

8.0 How to apply for Local Authority transport support

To complete an application form, students or their parent/carer will need to follow the link on our website from 1st June: <https://forms.n-somerset.gov.uk/ad/form/htstapplication#/1>

The application will be assessed to determine eligibility and travel provision. Upon receipt of the application form, the Integrated Transport Unit will normally process the application within 20 working days. We will inform you in writing of the outcome of your application.

It is the duty of the parent/ carer or student to disclose any information which may influence the travel support we provide. North Somerset will consider discretionary applications on a case by case basis.

9.0 Appeals and Complaints

9.1 Complaints

We aim to provide all our customers a good service, but sometimes we make mistakes. If a student or parent/carer wishes to raise a complaint regarding the transport service, they can do so via the following link:

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-council/complaints/complaining-council-services/>

9.2 Appeals

If the council refuses travel assistance or a student/parent/carer is unhappy with the transport arrangements offered, they have the right to appeal the decision. There are two stages to the appeals process:

a) Stage one Appeal: (Review by Senior Officer)

A written request can be submitted in writing to the appeals officer within 20 days of receipt of an offer or refusal. The officer will then review your transport decision. This should detail why the decision should be reviewed and include any information which should be considered alongside the review. A senior officer will have 20 working days to review the decision in line with policy and respond. This will include; whether or not the transport decision has been upheld, why that decision has been reached and the factors taken into account in reaching the decision.

b) Stage two Appeal: (Appeals Panel)

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of the stage 1 appeal, it can be escalated to a stage 2. This next stage is a further impartial re-consideration of the case. A parent/carer should submit written notification that they wish to escalate this to stage two within 20 working days of receiving the outcome of the stage one appeal. An independent panel will review the case within 40 working days and the decision of the appeals panel will be sent to the parent/carer within five working days of the appeal panel hearing.

9.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If following an appeal, you believe that North Somerset Council has refused help unfairly, made a mistake or not handled your appeal correctly, you may be able to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. For more information please visit: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

- and health; and
- Reporting any health and safety or safeguarding concerns promptly

10.0 Useful Contacts

Telephone: 01934 634715

E-mail address: schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk

10.1 Other Transport Schemes

Some learning/training establishments operate their own transport schemes. Students may choose to apply for transport under those schemes instead of via Cornwall Council. A brief summary of these schemes is given below. For full details, please contact the relevant learning/training establishment.

- **First Bus Young Person & Students Concessionary Scheme:** <https://www.firstbus.co.uk/bristol-bath-and-west/tickets/ticket-types/young-person-16-21-students>
- **National Rail 16 – 25 Railcard:** <https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>
- **National Rail 16 – 17 Saver Railcard:** <https://www.16-17saver.co.uk>
- **Diamond Travel Card (Disabled Persons / Companion Pass):** <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/parking-travel-roads/transport-travel/bus-travel/bus-passes/diamond-travelcard>
- **Baytree School:** <https://www.baytreeschool.co.uk/parents/#transport>
- **Ravenswood School:** <https://www.ravenswoodschool.org.uk/teaching-and-learning/post-16.html>
- **Weston College:** <https://www.weston.ac.uk/travelling-to-college>
- **Bridgwater and Taunton College:** <https://www.btc.ac.uk/students/essential-information/transport/>
- **Bath College** <https://www.bathcollege.ac.uk/college-life/getting-to-college>
- **City of Bristol College:** <https://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/>
- **St Brendan's Sixth Form College:** <https://www.stbrn.ac.uk/info/travelling-to-college/getting-to-college/>
- **South Gloucestershire and Stroud College:** <http://www.sgscol.ac.uk/subsidisedbus/>

11.0 Entitlement Flow Chart

