

# Home to School Travel Policy

## Post 16 Mainstream Policy Statement 2025/26

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# 1 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).

Separate policy documents are available on the [North Somerset website](#) for Post-16 SEND, mainstream, and SEND students of statutory school age (aged 5-16). This travel policy statement applies to students aged 16-19 who attend their nearest education establishment (or provider) that offers the elected course.

Post-16 travel is classified as a discretionary award, meaning that local authorities are not obligated to offer free or subsidised travel assistance. Local Authorities are required to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement that outlines the arrangements for providing transport, or any other support deemed necessary, to ensure access for all individuals of sixth-form age who are receiving education or training.

This award must be applied for annually through our application process on the North Somerset website. Travel support will not be awarded until the parent/ carer has completed this process. Post-16 Mainstream travel applications will open at the end of July.

## 2 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.

Most young people can 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.

North Somerset Council has the right to determine how travel support is provided to those aged 16 and above. The LA supports the Government initiative to promote sustainable travel, such as walking, cycling, and using public transport, where appropriate.

### 3 Eligibility Criteria

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

- Students are under 19 on 31st August, immediately preceding the start of the academic year.
- Students who are enrolled on a course that qualifies under the definition of 'Qualifying Education or Training' (full-time college or six-form education) and provide satisfactory evidence to the LA.

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

## 4 Travel Assistance Available

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:

### 4.1 Concessionary tickets – Public Transport

Post-16 students can receive a discount on all bus tickets through First Group, available across the West of England, including Bristol, Bath, Weston-Super-Mare, and Wells.

Railcards are also available at a discounted price through GWR (Great Western Railway).

For those services that are provided directly by schools or colleges or private operators, students will be expected to purchase these discounted tickets themselves; North Somerset Council do not manage these schemes.

### 4.2 The 16 – 19 Bursary

The 16-19 Bursary offers financial support to help young people overcome barriers to education. Schools and colleges manage the bursaries, and interested students should apply through their chosen institution. More information is available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) by searching for post-16 bursaries. There are two types of bursaries:

#### a) Vulnerable Groups Bursary:

Offers up to £1,200 a year for eligible students on study programs of 30 weeks or more. Those on shorter programs receive a pro-rata amount. Eligible groups include:

- In care

- Care leavers
- Recipients of Income Support or Universal Credit

Recipients of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments

**b) Discretionary Bursaries:**

Institutions award these to meet individual needs, such as transport, meals, books, and equipment. Eligibility criteria include:

- Aged 16-18
- Aged 19 or over with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Aged 19 or over continuing a study program started at ages 16-18 ('19+ continuers')
- Enrolled in a program inspected by a public body and funded by a government agency or local authority.

### **4.3 Young Parent/ Care to Learn (C2L)**

C2L offers childcare funding for young parents under 20 to support their education post-childbirth. This funding covers childcare during their study programs and any related travel costs. It is not intended to provide care for their child. It can, however, be used to help with additional travel costs involved in taking the child to the childcare provision. It also applies to work or industry placements, where these are defined as part of the college/sixth-form course.

## 5 Local Authority Travel Assistance

The local authority will determine the travel assistance offered to the student, ensuring it aligns with their responsibility to achieve value for money while also addressing the student's needs. There will be a general preference for shared travel.

Where the Local Authority approves a travel application, it will be for a Public Transport or Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service unless otherwise agreed. Parents/ Carers will be expected to make their own arrangements to transport the student to a centralised pick-up point.

Please note that travel assistance will not necessarily be 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 arrangements will not be tailored to meet individual timetables, i.e., where contract vehicle timetables are not in line with that of the student. Parents/ carers are expected to make suitable travel arrangements in such circumstances.

The Authority will not provide a Passenger Assistant where there is no statutory obligation to do so or an alternative agreement has been reached. If a Passenger Assistant is part of a shared travel arrangement, the Authority will consider sharing this resource based on the broader needs of the service.

For lengthy journeys that require vehicle changes due to the student's chosen course, the parent will be responsible for managing the trip, although assistance may still be provided.

## 6 Travel Options for Mainstream Post-16

### Students

#### 6.1 Public Transport Bus and Rail Passes

For services that are operated by private companies and not controlled by the Local Authority, daily prices may vary. We recommend contacting these companies directly for the most accurate pricing information. You can find the details of these private operators in the “Useful Contacts” section of this policy.

#### 6.2 Active Travel (Wheeling/ Cycling)

This is an opt-in initiative. Students who may lack confidence in cycling independently and seek additional training can benefit from our partners at [Bikeability](#) or Sustrans. They offer training at various levels and provide valuable information on supporting your child.

For those with mobility issues, Bikeability has adapted bikes to suit all abilities.

Parents/ carers can view all North Somerset cycle routes, including roads graded by the suitability for cycling, on our interactive map on our website. If you would like a more concise cycle map for your specific area, [Better by Bike](#) offers downloadable maps that can be printed.

#### 6.3 Vacant Seat Scheme (VSS)

If standard methods of travel are not possible due to distance and a lack of suitable public transport options. Students have the option to purchase a pass for a school bus

contracted by the council, provided that a seat is available under our Vacant Seat Payment Scheme.

Seats on these school buses will be prioritised for children under 16, for whom the council has a statutory obligation to provide free travel assistance. After this priority, post-16

students can purchase passes for any unallocated seats, with preference given to those who do not have alternative means of transport to school.

The passes allow students to take one journey each way at the beginning and end of the school day. As this is not a subsidised scheme, students must pay the full cost of the passes annually.

We kindly ask that all parents/ carers read our [VSPS policy](#) before applying for the scheme.

## 6.4 Special Considerations

The LA will focus its limited funds on the greatest needs, prioritising the most vulnerable community members requiring special consideration beyond standard arrangements. Discretionary financial assistance will be available only to learners who cannot access post-16 education without it. This includes:

- Those unable to afford transport despite receiving a bursary.
- Young parents.
- Individuals with exceptional circumstances (e.g. vulnerable or socially excluded youth).

Eligible learners must be enrolled full-time (over 540 guided learning hours per year) and live more than 3 miles from any accessible public service provider. All applications for discretionary assistance must be submitted in writing with supporting information.



Parents, carers, and students must disclose any relevant information that might impact their travel application.

## 7 Additional Circumstances

Consideration will be given to students who:

- Have a temporary disability or illness preventing attendance via usual methods.
- Face family circumstances, such as parental disability, that hinder educational access.
- Experience medical or physical difficulties that prevent them from walking 3 miles (with necessary accompaniment).
- Demonstrate vulnerability or social exclusion impacting their ability to pursue full-time studies.

All discretionary applications must be submitted in writing with relevant supporting information. Parents, carers, and students must disclose any relevant information that might impact their travel application.

## 8 Application Process

To complete an application form, parents/carers will need to follow the instructions on the home to school transport page on the [North Somerset Council website](https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk).

The application will be assessed by the Home to School Transport (HTST) team to determine eligibility and travel provision.

Upon receipt of the application form, the HTST team will normally process the application within twenty working days. For more complex travel assistance needs,

these timescales may take longer. We will inform you in writing of the outcome of your application.

Your travel assistance offer letter will include detailed information regarding the type of transport your child will receive, the driving staff including any passenger assistants and what time the transport will arrive and depart school.

To complete an application form, students or their parent/carer will need to follow the link on our website from 31 July: [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/hometoschooltransport](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/hometoschooltransport)

North Somerset will consider discretionary applications on a case-by-case basis.

## 9 Complaints

If the parent/ carer is unhappy with the service provided, they have the right to submit a complaint.

The service will investigate your complaint and aim to reply within ten working days. You will be told when a reply will take more than ten working days and given a date to expect a reply.

To register a complaint please do this via the [North Somerset Council Website](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk).

## 10 School Travel Assistance Review

If the council refuses a child's home-to-school travel assistance or you believe the travel offer received is not suitable, the parent/ carer has the right to ask for a School Travel Assistance Review (STAR). The STAR process is for parents/ carers who wish to make a challenge in the areas of:

- Travel arrangements offered

- The child's eligibility for travel assistance (where a parent believes the policy has not been applied correctly)
- The distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances
- The safety of the route to school

*Parents and carers must provide all relevant information and evidence at Stage 1 that may support your STAR. Please note that the final decision will not take into account any information submitted during Stage 2.*

*Additionally, we will only accept information sent from the parent/ carer's email address; we cannot accept emails from third parties.*

To launch a School Travel Assistance Review (STAR), please email the relevant information to [school.travel.appeal@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:school.travel.appeal@n-somerset.gov.uk) within twenty working days of receiving the travel offer or refusal. You will be provided with a unique reference number for your case. We kindly request that you keep this document safe and refer to it when emailing for updates. The STAR process consists of two clear stages:

### 10.1 Stage one: Review by Senior Officer

Once we receive written confirmation of your intent to launch a STAR, including evidence that the policy has not been applied correctly under the following criteria:

- You are not satisfied with the travel arrangements offered to you.
- The school is the nearest suitable school with a place available, or is the transport area school for your home address.
- You believe the walking route exceeds the statutory walking distance.
- You consider the walking route to be unsafe for a child accompanied by an adult.
- Your child has a medical need, or there are other exceptional needs that mean travel assistance is needed. Any medical need would need to be evidenced in writing by a medical practitioner.

All the information will be forwarded to our Senior Officers for their review.

Next, the senior officer will have twenty working days to review the decision and the information provided in relation to the home-to-school travel policy. They will then respond with details regarding whether the decision is approved or refused. This response will provide a thorough explanation of the reasons behind the decision and the factors considered in making it.

## **10.2 Stage Two: School Travel Assistance Review (STAR)**

### **Panel**

If a parent/ carer is not satisfied with the outcome of stage one of the STAR, an impartial reconsideration of the case can be undertaken through to stage two of the STAR process. A parent/ carer should submit a written notification that they wish to escalate this to Stage Two within twenty working days of receiving the outcome of Stage One.

Within forty working days of receiving the parent/ carer's request to proceed to stage two, an independent transport STAR panel will review the case. The decision of the STAR panel will be sent to the parent/ carer within five working days of the STAR panel hearing.

## **10.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

If you have completed the STAR process and believe that North Somerset Council has unfairly refused help, 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 the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman website](#).

## 11 Contacts

Telephone: 01934 634715

E-mail address: [schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk)

### 11.1 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 North Somerset Council. A summary of these schemes is provided below. For complete details, please reach out to the appropriate learning or training institution.

Operator	Website
<b>Backwell School</b>	<a href="https://www.backwellschool.net/page/?title=Travel+to+School&amp;pid=30">https://www.backwellschool.net/page/?title=Travel+to+School&amp;pid=30</a>
<b>Bath College</b>	<a href="https://www.bathcollege.ac.uk/college-life/getting-to-college">https://www.bathcollege.ac.uk/college-life/getting-to-college</a>
<b>Baytree School</b>	<a href="https://www.baytreeschool.co.uk/parents/#transport">https://www.baytreeschool.co.uk/parents/#transport</a>
<b>Bridgwater and Taunton College</b>	<a href="https://www.btc.ac.uk/students/essential-information/transport/">https://www.btc.ac.uk/students/essential-information/transport/</a>
<b>Chew Valley School</b>	<a href="https://www.chewvalleyschool.co.uk/">https://www.chewvalleyschool.co.uk/</a>
<b>Churchill Academy and Sixth Form</b>	<a href="https://www.churchill-academy.org/Information/Transport/">https://www.churchill-academy.org/Information/Transport/</a>
<b>City of Bristol College</b>	<a href="https://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/">https://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/</a>
<b>Clevedon School</b>	<a href="https://www.clevedonschool.org.uk/">https://www.clevedonschool.org.uk/</a>
<b>Diamond Travel Card (Disabled Persons / Companion Pass)</b>	<a href="https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/parking-travel-roads/transport-travel/bus-travel/bus-passes/diamond-travelcard">https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/parking-travel-roads/transport-travel/bus-travel/bus-passes/diamond-travelcard</a>

<b>First Bus Young Person &amp; Students Concessionary Scheme</b>	<a href="https://www.firstbus.co.uk/bristol-bath-and-west/tickets/ticket-types/young-person-16-21-students">https://www.firstbus.co.uk/bristol-bath-and-west/tickets/ticket-types/young-person-16-21-students</a>
<b>Nailsea School</b>	<a href="https://www.nailseaschool.com/">https://www.nailseaschool.com/</a>
<b>National Rail 16 – 17 Saver Railcard</b>	<a href="https://www.16-17saver.co.uk">https://www.16-17saver.co.uk</a>
<b>National Rail 16 – 25 Railcard</b>	<a href="https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/">https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/</a>
<b>Ravenswood School</b>	<a href="https://www.ravenswoodschool.org.uk/teaching-and-learning/post-16.html">https://www.ravenswoodschool.org.uk/teaching-and-learning/post-16.html</a>
<b>South Gloucestershire and Stroud College</b>	<a href="http://www.sgscol.ac.uk/subsidisedbus/">http://www.sgscol.ac.uk/subsidisedbus/</a>
<b>St Brendan’s Sixth Form College</b>	<a href="https://www.stbrn.ac.uk/info/travelling-to-college/getting-to-college/">https://www.stbrn.ac.uk/info/travelling-to-college/getting-to-college/</a>
<b>Weston College</b>	<a href="https://www.weston.ac.uk/travelling-to-college">https://www.weston.ac.uk/travelling-to-college</a>