

Home to School Travel Policy

Post-16 SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) Statement 2025/2026

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Tel: 01934 634715

Email: schooltransport@n-somerset.gov.uk

Post: Home to School Travel, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Rd, W-s-M, BS23 1UJ

Web: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/hometoschooltransport



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 Local Authority 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** 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 living further than 3 miles from their educational establishment or provider (accompanied as necessary)
- Students are studying a full-time course.
- Students who are enrolled on a course which qualifies under the definition of 'Qualifying Education or Training'. and provide satisfactory evidence to the Local Authority:
- 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 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.

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 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

rain 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.

4.2 Diamond Travel Card

Young people (11 years old and above) who are registered as disabled can apply for a concessionary bus pass through the council. Those unable to travel independently due to the nature of their disability may also be entitled to apply for a bus pass for a companion to travel with them.

To be eligible for a Diamond Travel Card, the young person must be registered disabled or meet the following criteria:

- be blind or partially sighted
- be profoundly or severely deaf
- be without speech
- be disabled or have suffered an injury which has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to walk
- be without arms or have long-term loss of use of both arms
- have learning difficulties
- be unable to drive for medical reasons, not including drivers banned for drug or alcohol use

For more information on how to apply for the Diamond Travel Card, please visit [our website](#).

Young people in receipt of a disability concessionary bus pass through the council can access free transport between 09:00 – 05:00 Monday to Friday and at any times on weekends and Bank Holidays.

The council understands the importance of helping young people with disabilities to lead an independent life as possible and can be contacted to discuss individual cases where some additional support in accessing, or fully benefiting from, a concessionary bus pass may be required.

4.3 The 16 – 19-Year-Old 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 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.

4.4 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, which are a defined part of the study programme.

4.5 Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Young people over 16 may qualify for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) which can help with extra living costs, including the cost of moving around if they have both:

- a long-term physical or mental health condition or disability
- difficulty doing certain everyday tasks or getting around because of your condition.

For more information, Personal Independence Payment (PIP): What PIP is for - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/PIP)). <https://www.gov.uk/PIP>

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 initially be for Public Transport, Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), or Personal Travel Allowance (PTA).

Parents/ Carers will be expected to make their own arrangements to transport the student to a centralised pick-up point where Public Transport or DRT services have been offered.

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 Post-16 SEND Students

6.1 Public Transport Bus and Rail Passes

Where appropriate, as determined by the Home to School Transport Team, a seasonal bus or train ticket will be issued to the student for use throughout the county.

6.2 Active Travel (Wheeling/ Cycling)

Students who may lack confidence in cycling independently and seek additional training can benefit from our partners at [Bikeability](#) and [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 their 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 Independent Travel Training

This initiative aims to help students develop independent skills for accessing the public transport network, promote a more sustainable travel option, and provide greater flexibility for school and college schedules.

An initial Independent Travel Training Capability Assessment can be made in conjunction with any travel offer. After this assessment, the student could be enrolled on a six-week training course tailored to their needs. This will assist them with attaining

independent travel skills, establishing community connections, and making informed travel decisions. The course will consist of the following elements:

- 1 to 1 Mentoring
- Road Safety – Green Cross Code
- Training on how to access Public Transport e.g., Bus/ Train/ DRT
- Problem-Solving – What happens if scenarios
- Journey Planning
- the travel trainers shadow Independent Journeys to solidify the young person's knowledge.

To enquire further or enrol, please contact the Independent Travel Training Team via email – traveltraining@n-somerset.gov.uk

6.4 Personal Travel Allowance

The Personal Travel Allowance (PTA) is a financial support program designed to assist with covering the costs of travel to and from school or college. The Home to School Transport Team will determine the amount contributed by the Local Authority, which must be agreed upon in collaboration with the parent or carer. The payment will be tailored based on the application and will be made directly to the student or their family.

PTAs offer a high degree of flexibility to meet your needs. They can be used not only to reimburse journeys undertaken in the parents'/carers' own vehicle but also for train tickets, privately contracted services, and travel undertaken by friends or family members. The Local Authority will only cover the cost of the primary mode of transport.

The student or their designated carer(s) is responsible for arranging travel solutions that best meet their needs and circumstances. These arrangements can be adjusted later if necessary.

Any parents/ carers considering this travel offer are encouraged to read our [PTA Policy](#) before committing to the scheme.

6.5 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 services 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. This is not a subsidised scheme; students must pay the full cost of the passes annually.

Please note that seats will be allocated to students on a first-come, first-served basis.

Seats are not guaranteed to be available on every service.

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

6.6 Alternative Travel Options

The local authority will evaluate alternative travel options for young people in exceptional circumstances and/or those with high needs on a case-by-case basis. We will not unnecessarily put families through the appeals process.

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.
- Attend a placement with transport available to compulsory-age school students. The Local Authority will assess the student's application and assign them to these services on a first-come, first-served basis. The standard policies of the vacant seat payment scheme (VSS) will apply.

These considerations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for a discretionary award.

8 Application Process

To complete an application form, parents/ carers should follow the instructions on the home-to-school transport page on the [North Somerset Council website](#). We encourage parents/ carers to provide as much information as possible during this stage to help the application in the assessment stages.

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.

If successful, you will receive an offer letter that will include details about the travel option being provided to your young person.

If you have been allocated Public Transport, Rail or Direct Responsive Transport options, your letter will contain links to help you plan your child's journey to school/college.

If you have been assigned an Alternative Travel Offer or a Vacant Seat Scheme route, the letter will specify the route name and provide a link to the operator's contact details.

To complete an application form, students or their parent/carer will need to follow the link on our website: 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 transport service, they can 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 so 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 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

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 brief summary of these schemes is given below. For full details, please contact the relevant learning/training establishment.

| Operator | Website |
|--|---|
| Backwell School | https://www.backwellschool.net/page/?title=Travel+to+School&pid=30 |
| Bath College | https://www.bathcollege.ac.uk/college-life/getting-to-college |
| Baytree School | https://www.baytreeschool.co.uk/parents/#transport |
| Bridgwater and Taunton College | https://www.btc.ac.uk/students/essential-information/transport/ |
| Chew Valley School | https://www.chewvalleyschool.co.uk/ |
| Churchill Academy and Sixth Form | https://www.churchill-academy.org/Information/Transport/ |
| City of Bristol College | https://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/ |
| Clevedon School | https://www.clevedonschool.org.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 |

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