

Slough Borough Council Post-16 Travel Assistance Policy Statement

Academic Year 2023 – 2024

Travel Assistance policy statement for young people aged 16-18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and those young people aged 19 – 24 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

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Introduction

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual travel assistance 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.

Most young people in Slough will be able to access their education without the support of the Council. It is expected that public transport and other travel options (including financial support) are explored in the first instance and utilised wherever possible.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support.

‘Sixth form age’ refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (years 12,13,14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties / disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

This policy uses the term ‘Post 16’ to include both learners of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties / disabilities up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that Slough Borough Council (the council) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

Aims and Objectives

The council has the following aims and objectives when assessing transport / travel support:

- Social integration of children and young people whatever their needs
- Support and develop Independence and resilience for children and young people with SEND and their families
- Environmentally sustainable travel
- Efficient use of public resources
- To support students from low-income families access education

Transport and travel assistance

Low Income Support - Student reduced fare card

The Student reduced fare card supports those students from low-income families to encourage and enable participation in Post 16 education.

A Student reduced fare card is available for those meeting the necessary low-income eligibility criteria detailed in the how to apply section.

There is no charge for the Student Reduced Fare Card.

This enables students to travel on either First Buses (that either begin or end in the borough of Slough) at a reduced fare.

The Student Reduced Fare Card will enable some students to travel to a number of FE colleges outside the Slough area also. Some of these are listed below.

College
East Berkshire College (Langley)
Bracknell & Wokingham College (Bracknell Centre)
Berkshire College of Agriculture
Strodes College
Uxbridge College
Amersham & Wycombe College (High Wycombe Campus)
Kensington & Chelsea College (Holland Park Centre)
Westminster Kingsway College (Victoria Centre)

Who is the Student Reduced Fare Card for?

The card is available for students aged 16-18 and those who reach 19 whilst continuing a course in the 2023-24 academic year.

Cardholders will be able to purchase daily, weekly, and monthly tickets at under 16 rates.

There are no time restrictions on the use of the Student Reduced Fare Card. Card holders are able to travel all day, all evening and during weekends or holidays.

Lost or stolen cards will be replaced once in the academic year and students will be required to pay a £15 charge in this instance. Both cards will require three passport photographs.

How to apply

Students are required to complete an application form, and must include three passport photos, and copies of documentary evidence of meeting low income thresholds as follows:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income of £16,190 or less
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Applications can be downloaded from the Slough Borough Council's Website.

Concessionary tickets for young people 16 – 25 from public transport providers

National 16 – 17 Saver (Train)

In January 2019, the Department for Transport announced the launch of a new national Railcard scheme which benefits 16 - 17 year olds. This Railcard offers 16 - 17 year olds a 50% discount on rail travel, and is available from September 2019. More information is available on the Railcard website.

The Saver offers 16 - 17 year olds:

- a 50% discount off standard anytime, off- peak, PlusBus, advance and season tickets
- can be used on South Western Railways, Southern and Great Western Railway network and
 - across the National Rail network (except on ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper services)
- the card costs £30 and is valid for one year or until your 18th birthday
- a season ticket purchased before your 18th birthday can run up to 4 months after you turn 18. For example if you turn 18 in February 2020 then you can purchase a season ticket which will still give you 50% discount for travel up until June 2020

Concessionary Bus Travel

The Slough concessionary bus pass (national scheme) entitles holders to travel free of charge on off-peak local bus services anywhere in England. Off-peak hours are 9:30am until 11pm on weekdays and all day at weekends and bank holidays.

To be eligible for a concessionary bus pass you must be:

- of State Pension age; or
- have a permanent disability – where the disability has lasted at least 12 months, or be likely to last at least 12 months and has a substantial effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

If you are disabled, you will automatically qualify if you:

- are in receipt of higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance or,
- are in receipt of war pensioner's mobility supplement or,
- have the disability registration card
- are blind or partially sighted
- are profoundly or severely deaf
- are without speech
- have a disability or have suffered an injury which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to walk
- do not have arms or have long-term loss of the use of both arms
- have a learning disability
- have been refused a driving licence because of physical incapacity
- suffer from severe mental illness
- have 8 points or more in the moving around component for the Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Further details can be found on the Council's website: www.slough.gov.uk/transport-travel/concessionary-bus-passes

Travel support from schools and colleges

Students may also purchase seats on vehicles run by individual schools, colleges or by third party commercial operators on the school's or college's behalf. For information on available routes please check individual school/college websites.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people 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

2. 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 2022 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2022 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2022 and continuing on 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

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.

Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning. Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days)
- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to the childcare provider

Types of child care

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

- your childcare provider needs to confirm your child's attendance
- your school or college needs to confirm that you're attending your course

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Attendance

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or a national of a [European Economic Area \(EEA\) country](#)
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding. This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under 19 Bus Only Ticket or for those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19 – 25 card.

For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim>

Further Discretionary Support for Students aged 16-19 attending post 16 education

The Council will exercise its discretion to provide travel assistance for students aged 16 to 19 (when continuing a course commenced before their 19th birthday) where it considers that travel assistance is necessary to enable the young person to reasonably access their education or training provision.

The Council is clear that as young people with SEND approach adulthood, where appropriate, travel assistance will be provided to support independence.

In assessing eligibility for students entering post- 16 education and training for travel assistance, particular attention will be paid to the following criteria.

- whether the student is currently in receipt (or has applied for) of any funding from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and to what value
- the location of the sixth form unit or college the student would like to attend (if this is not a local provision, the local authority would need to know that the course being taken is not available locally).
- whether the sixth form unit is an extension to the school previously attended by the student and named in their EHCP
- the distance from the student's home to their education or training establishment and the journey time
- whether the young person has SEND and/or mobility difficulties which would impede their access to their educational placement, either independently or otherwise, for example, a wheelchair user
- whether the young person has SEND which would make it unsafe for them to travel independently
- whether the public transport journey to the nearest suitable placement is too complex for the young person to be expected to travel independently

Applicants must also evidence why it is necessary for the Council and not the student/family to make suitable travel arrangements. To assess this and understand the individual circumstances the Council will need to know:

- what other arrangements have been considered or tried and why they are not suitable
- if there is a family member or carer who is willing and able to transport the student
- whether the student is in receipt of higher rate mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance, the purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, with severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outside. We would normally expect this benefit to be fully utilised and if there are any factors limiting its use details should be provided

- whether there is a 'Motability' vehicle for which the student may or may not be the driver
- any other needs or circumstances that might need to be taken into account

Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Where an individual has been awarded assistance with travel this will be subject to payment of the appropriate contribution payment.

Contribution Payment for Students aged 16-19 attending post 16 education

Contribution payments for travel assistance will only apply to those aged 16-18, and those continuing their course when turning 19 years of age.

Contribution details for student types are as follows:

Low income families

Where travel assistance is provided to qualifying low income families, this will be subject to a contribution from the student/parent of £750 per annum. The option will be available to pay this in termly instalments over the academic year. Children from low income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals, or those families whose annual taxable household income is less than £16,190* and are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC).

If the financial circumstances of the family/individual are impacting the young person's ability to attend their study programme, then a request for the contribution to be waived can be submitted to the Council. It is expected that all avenues for financial support have been explored before that Council will consider any contribution waiver.

Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Where a post 16 student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and is attending the school named within their EHCP as the nearest appropriate school for their post 16 education – public transport will be promoted for this group and travel training referrals will be made for all students with the expectation that they will be assessed for suitability for training by the end of the first term of post 16 education. A charge for travel assistance will be based on the income of the family at the time of application. Low income families, as defined in above will be required to contribute £750 towards the cost of support provided.

All other applicants will be required to make a contribution of £750 towards the cost of travel support.

Students with SEN who no longer have an EHCP

Those students who had an EHCP in year 11 who will be attending a school or college to continue their education and require additional support to do so. Low income families, as defined above will be required to contribute £750 towards the cost of travel assistance.

All other applicants will be required to make a contribution of £750 towards the cost of travel support.

All applications will be considered based on the evidence provided to support the claim at the time of application.

Other Students

Bespoke transport or individual taxis will not be provided. The cost of travel assistance for this group will be £750 per year, per student.

Reimbursement of the Charge

If travel assistance is no longer required part way through a term, a partial reimbursement of the charge may apply, provided all tickets/passes have been returned and are received within the timescales stated in the table below. When calculating a reimbursement for tickets/passes received after the first day of a term an administrative charge of £60 will apply. The following levels of refund will be payable after the administration charge has been taken:

Length of time ticket/pass has been used	Refund Due
Up to 4 weeks	75%
4 to 8 weeks	50%
Over 8 weeks	0%

No reimbursement will be paid during the summer term.

Support for Students aged 19-25 attending post 16 education

The post-19 (19 to 25) travel assistance powers held by the Council apply to students with special educational needs and disabilities aged between 19 and 25 inclusive who have an EHCP.

The Council recognises that young people are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than pupils of statutory school age. As such the policy for post-19 (19-25) students is focused upon a needs-led approach in which the individual needs of each young adult are assessed to inform the appropriate form of travel assistance.

‘Post-19’ will include learners aged 19 to 25 (starting from the academic year after they turn 19).

The Council will consider whether assistance with travel is necessary to enable young adults with EHCPs to maintain attendance at their education placement. If it is identified that assistance is necessary, then there would be no charge/ financial contribution expected from the young adult.

For post-19 students starting a new course, they must also evidence why it is necessary for the Council and not the student to make travel arrangements. The same assessment and considerations that were applied to students aged 16-19 will be applied to those 19-25 based on the evidence provided and, on a case,-by-case basis to determine if assistance from the Council with travel and access to their education placement is necessary.

Where it is identified that assistance with travel is necessary for a learner aged 19-25 then no contribution charge will be required.

Council provided Travel Assistance

Where students are identified as only able to access their post 16 education with assistance from the Council, after exhausting all other travel options, then the Council may

allocate a travel option from the categories below.

The Council will aim to use the highest appropriate category on the list, taking into account the needs of the pupil, and how the council can enable them to develop skills for independent travel:

1. provision of a travel pass for the pupil;
2. provision of independent travel training;
3. provision of a travel bursary;
4. payment of car mileage/travel reimbursement for the pupil/pupil's parent(s) (with consent);
5. provision of a travel pass for pupil and parent;
6. provision of a shared vehicle without escort;
7. provision of a shared vehicle with escort;
8. provision of an individual vehicle without escort;
9. provision of an individual vehicle with escort.

All travel provision will be reviewed as part of the annual review of needs and if appropriate as part of an early review. Travel assistance provision may be withdrawn or amended if circumstances have changed or the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Panel considers the withdrawal appropriate as an encouragement to independence.

Travel training

Local authorities have a duty to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 25 in education and training. Independent travel training aims to achieve this.

Independent travel is a valuable skill for preparing for adulthood, an essential employability skill, and provides greater opportunities for young people, not least increasing confidence in their abilities and reducing their sense of reliance on family members.

In line with the Council's aims and objectives to support independence and prepare young people for adulthood, and where appropriate employment.

The Council will work in partnership with education establishments and other individuals to identify young people who could benefit from ITT and contact their families to invite them to take part in ITT.

The Council will also contact young people and their families who will be transitioning from statutory education into post-16 and above to invite them to take part in ITT.

An ITT assessment will be carried out in the home, with the support of the family, to confirm the suitability of the young person for the ITT programme, taking into account the following criteria:

- existing level of independent travel skills
- the likelihood of the pupil being eligible for SEN travel assistance under the 16 to 19 & 19-25 policy
- the age of the pupil
- the distance between home and school
- the SEND of the pupil
- the route which the young person would need to undertake
- journey times using public transport and the complexity of the journey
- the frequency of the journeys required

This assessment would take place before the pupil undertakes the ITT programme, which would last for approximately four to six weeks. During the programme, the pupil will travel to and from their education or training provision each day with their dedicated one to one ITT trainer.

During the period when a pupil is taking part in the ITT, this will be their travel assistance offer. At the end of the ITT programme, the Council will review the pupil's progress with the family to decide if it is appropriate for the pupil to continue to travel independently. If it is not appropriate for the pupil to travel independently, their previous travel assistance offer will be reinstated. Although it is expected that the majority of young people would benefit from ITT, it is acknowledged that for some young people, due to the nature of their SEND, ITT will not be appropriate.

Those not in education, employment or training (NEET)

To support the provision of suitable education or training for young people who are 16 and 17 years old and not in education, employment or training (NEET), Slough Council may offer fixed term (up to one month) travel cards at subsidised rates to facilitate travel to interviews, work experience and other activities necessary to secure appropriate provision. To be eligible, young people must be registered and receiving support through Early Help and Preventative Services.

Available support in other circumstances

Recognising that the Council's discretionary powers should not be unreasonably fettered by its general policy, the Council will consider and may agree requests for

assistance with travel to Post 16 education placements where there are considered to be extenuating circumstances that prevent a young person accessing their further education placement unless travel assistance is available. If the parent/carer or young person believes extenuating circumstances exist and assistance with travel is necessary, then they should provide additional information and evidence when submitting their application for consideration.

The overriding expectation is that parents/carers and young persons will have exhausted all other available options to support and enable travel to and from their education placement. The Council will need to be satisfied it has been demonstrated that, for social, medical, financial or personal reasons access to their education placement cannot be facilitated without assistance with towards travel arrangements.

The determination will be based on evidence received to support the case whether travel assistance is necessary in order for the child to access their education.

In all cases the decision whether to exercise discretion will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Applying for travel assistance/support

All requests for travel assistance for children and young people with an EHCP must have a completed application form. To find out how to access a copy families can contact the Travel Assistance Team on 01753 875708.

Deadline for applications

For Post 16 Travel Assistance Applications an application window will operate between 1 March until 30 September each year for new starters which then reopens for 1 January to close again on 31 January in each academic year. We will consider circumstances of applications made outside of this window where someone's circumstances changed unexpectedly (eg a house move or drop in income).

Appeals

There is a two-stage process for parents who wish to challenge a decision about:

- the travel assistance arrangements offered;
- their child/young person's eligibility;

Stage one: Review by a senior officer

- A parent/pupil has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's home to school travel assistance decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parent believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

- Where this is possible, within 20 working days of receipt of the parent/pupil's written request a senior officer reviews the original decision and sends the parent a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review

Stage two: Review by an independent appeal panel

A parent has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.

Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents request an independent appeal panel considers written and verbal representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case and gives a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days).

