Draft Home to School Transport (Post 16) SEN & LDD Travel Policy

South Gloucestershire Council

Delivering for you

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Table of Contents

Draft Home to School Transport (Post 16) SEN & LDD Travel Policy 1
Introduction 1
Aims and Objectives 2
Transport and travel support 3
Travel Assistance: Young learners from families on low income 5
Travel Assistance: Young Parents / Care to Learn 5
Local Authority support for young people 6
How the Local Authority will support young people entitled to travel assistance 6
1. Independent Travel training 6
2. Concessionary Scheme 7
3. Personal Transport budget 7
Young People aged 19-25 attending post 16 education 7
Apprenticeships 8
Exceptional Circumstances 8
Reviews for young people entitled to travel support 8
Applying for Local Authority travel support 9
Appeals Process 9

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 support 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 South Gloucestershire Council 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 young people who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (years 12,13,14).

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

The Council has a duty under s.508A of the Education Act 1996 to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport for all children and young people in South Gloucestershire. This requires the Council to have a strategy to develop sustainable travel and transport infrastructure and to promote these modes of travel.

This policy uses the term 'Post 16' to include young people of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties / disabilities up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that South Gloucestershire Council considers necessary to facilitate Post 16 young people 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.

Home to school travel provision applies to home (the place where the young person is habitually resident) to school (the educational setting where the child is enrolled) travel arrangements, and vice versa. This does not include pick-up or drop-offs at locations other than home or school, such as any extracurricular activities or appointments. Pick up and drop offs will only be at the start and end of the establishment's day.

Aims and Objectives

As a Council, we aim to ensure that young people have sufficient support to be prepared for adulthood, being able to access education, employment, training and essential services across South Gloucestershire.

Transport and travel support

Set out below are details of the travel arrangements in place for post-16 learners. These options are available to support young people to stay in education or training i.e. apprenticeships or traineeships until they are 19.

Education and learning may include one of the following:

- full-time education, such as school or college;
- work-based learning, such as an apprenticeship;
- part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

The travel support options available to all students aged 16-19 in learning or training are as follows:

(i) South Gloucestershire Council's Concessionary Travel Scheme. This is available for students attending South Gloucestershire schools. Details of how to apply are provided below.

(ii) Students may purchase discounted travel tickets from the First Bus Group or from various colleges as detailed below.

(iii) Students may apply for a 16-25 Student Railcard. Further information is available at www.16-25railcard.co.uk.
Students are advised to note that availability may be limited and to read the guiding principles set out in Section 3 before applying.

PLEASE NOTE THAT PRICES ARE STATED AS PER THE DATE OF THE DOCUMENT.

(i) Concessionary Travel Scheme

Sixth form students attending South Gloucestershire schools may be able to purchase a concessionary place at a subsidised rate of £209 (price as at September 2024) for two terms (based on a six term year), £627 per year, on existing contracted transport to South Gloucestershire schools providing that spare seats are available. Concessionary seats are available only at the beginning and end of the school day. In order to secure a concessionary seat Parent/Carers are required to arrange payments in advance. A range of payment options are available. The Local Authority may consider withdrawing the concessionary seat if payment is not made.

The application form and scheme conditions are available on the South Gloucestershire Council website at www.southglos.gov.uk. Applications should be submitted before 31 July. In the event that there are more applications than seats available, places are allocated by drawing lots. Young people entitled to free school meals will be eligible for a concessionary seat free of charge, provided that a seat is available.

(ii) Discounted Tickets: First Bus Student Tickets

First West of England Student Tickets: A number of student saver tickets are available from First West of England Bus Company as follows:

Young People (16-21) and students (of any age if in full time education) can get up to 30% discount on all tickets if they have a First Photo ID pass or their student photo ID.

Single Fares 16–21-year-olds & students

Ticket Type	Cost
Single on bus in the Bristol Zone	£1.80
Day on bus in the Bristol Zone	£5.40

Day & Season Ticket Prices – 16–21-year-olds & students

Ticket Type	Cost
FirstDay Bristol Zone Unlimited travel for one day, valid until 4.29am following day	£5.40
FirstWeek Bristol Zone Unlimited travel for seven days	£21.15
FirstMonth Bristol Zone Unlimited travel for 31 days	£75.42
FirstYear Bristol Zone Unlimited travel for a whole year	£756.90

Outer Zone Prices – 16–21-year-olds & students

Ticket Type	Cost
FirstDay West of England Zone Unlimited travel in the Outer & Inner Zones for one day	£6.30
FirstWeek West of England Zone Unlimited travel in the Outer & Inner Zones for seven days	£27.00
FirstMonth West of England Zone Unlimited travel in the Outer & Inner Zones for 31 days	£85.50
FirstYear West of England Zone Unlimited travel in the Outer & Inner Zones for a whole year	£945.00

Notes: These offers/prices are as at the time of publication bought online (mticket) or from the driver. A reduced price is offered if you buy your ticket beforehand. Check current details with First Bus www.first-group.com/bristol-bath-and-west/tickets and 4 also https://www.firstgroup.com/bristol-bath-and-west/tickets/ticket-types/youngperson16-21-students

First Bus tickets for Bristol zone and West of England zone include the Metro bus service.

Stagecoach West offer student discounts on their local bus services. For further details you can contact the following: https://www.stagecoachbus.com/tickets

Bristol & South Glos Flexi5: £23.00 (on app) for discounted tickets.

Travel Assistance: Young learners from families on low income

Young learners aged 16-19 attending further education or training may be eligible to receive financial support under a government scheme called the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

The Bursary Fund can help pay for essential education-related costs including travel costs. Schools and colleges are responsible for awarding bursaries and verifying eligibility of students. Vulnerable students, such as those in care, care leavers, young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit and disabled students in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, or Personal Independence Payments are eligible for a bursary of £1,200 for a full academic year.

Students are advised to contact their school, college or training provider's Student Support Services to see if they are eligible to receive a 16-19 Bursary Fund/financial help. Details of the scheme are also available at www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund. Institutions are free to determine the assessment criteria for eligibility for bursaries awarded on a discretionary basis. Please note that the Council does not administer the discretionary or Bursary Fund.

Travel Assistance: Young Parents / Care to Learn

Young parents may be eligible for support with childcare and travel costs and learning providers are encouraged to support young people to apply for Care to Learn. Details are available at www.gov.uk/care-to-learn.

Sustainable Travel

Within the Partnership Strategy for Children and Young People, South Gloucestershire Council recognises a priority to improve access to sustainable travel for children and young people in South Gloucestershire. This is further developed in the Council's Sustainable School Travel and Transport Strategy which promotes the use of sustainable travel to improve the health and well-being of all children and young people.

In an effort to reduce reliance on private car use and help develop the necessary skills for adult life, young people are actively encouraged to travel independently to school/college or their place of work. A survey of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure is provided as part of the Strategy to enable children and young people to view the cycle paths and bus routes available to facilitate travel to and from or between schools, colleges or other education placements. The survey can be accessed at www.southglos.gov.uk (enter transport audit in the 'search this site' box).

Local Authority Support

The law requires young people to remain in education or training until the age of 18.

Although you must now remain in education or training until you are 18, the age range of free travel support available to eligible young people has not increased with this.

While the council does not have to provide free support with travel for 16-18 age group, it must publish each year a travel policy statement, setting out what travel arrangements are available to enable 16–18-year-olds to participate in education.

Local Authority support for young people

Students can only receive travel support if they are aged 16 to 25 and meet all the following conditions:

- the student is subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan; and
- the student is attending the nearest appropriate education provision for a relevant full-time course and the young person is unable to travel to the education setting independently; and
- the student is resident in South Gloucestershire.

Young people who meet the above criteria are entitled to travel assistance.

To be eligible for transport support, young people should live more than three miles away from the school/training establishment (this is the distance which it is assumed children and young people aged over eight could be reasonably expected to walk). However, it is recognised that this may be an unrealistic walking distance for individuals with particular disabilities, and in this instance, the Council would seek guidance from parents, school and other health professionals.

Young people aged 16-25 who will be attending a school or college to continue their education and who do not have a current Education, Health and Care Plan or a Special Educational Needs or Disability will be responsible for all their own travel costs and arrangements.

How the Local Authority will support young people entitled to travel assistance

The Local Authority will consider one of the following options for providing support to entitled young people based on assessment of circumstances and needs;

1. Independent Travel training

As a Local authority we wish 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.

Travel training referrals will be made available for young people. It is expected that the Travel Trainers will assess whether the young person can engage in travel training by the end of year 11 education.

The Council will work in partnership with education establishments and other individuals to identify young people who could benefit from Independent Travel Training (ITT) Further information on Travel Training, how it is assessed, delivered, and the benefits it provides young people can be found on Travel Training | South Gloucestershire (southglos.gov.uk)

The Local Authority promotes public transport in the first instance

2. Concessionary Scheme

The concessionary schemes outlined in the Transport and Travel Support section of this policy p4-8 are available to young people entering post-16 education with special educational needs or a disability.

3. Personal Transport budget

Students who meet the conditions as outlined above will receive 45p per mile to support with travel arrangements. The payment will be made for two round trips per day that the student is attending the setting. Payment will be calculated from the young person's home address to the setting and back.

Young People aged 19-25 attending post 16 education

The Council has travel support duties to relevant young adults (an adult who is aged under 25, started their current course after their 19th birthday and for whom an EHCP is maintained).

The Council recognises that adults are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than young people of statutory school age. As such the policy for post-19 (19-25) young people 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 support.

'Post-19' will include young persons aged 19 to 25 (who started their course before their 19th birthday).

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

For post-19 young people starting a new course, they must also evidence why it is necessary for the Council to make their travel arrangements. The same assessment and considerations that were applied to young people 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 support from the Council with travel and access to their education placement is necessary.

Apprenticeships

The employer is responsible for ensuring that students have reasonable expenses met in full, where reasonable expenses are needed to overcome barriers to learning. These may include the cost of travelling to or from the place of learning or work placement. Employers are encouraged to support trainees with expenses such as transport and meals. It may also be worth asking the learning provider if they offer their own transport service as some may do this.

Support with travel costs may be available from the Government's Access to Work scheme. For further information go to Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Exceptional Circumstances

The overriding expectation is that parent/carer(s) and or young person(s) will have exhausted all other available options to support and enable travel to and from their education placement

However, the Council will consider and may agree requests for travel assistance with travel to Post 16 education placements where there are circumstances that prevent a young person accessing their further education placement unless travel assistance is provided. If the parent/carer(s) or young person believes extenuating circumstances exist and support with travel is necessary, then they should provide additional information and evidence when submitting their application for consideration.

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 support towards travel arrangements.

The determination will be based on evidence received to support the case that travel support is necessary for the young person to access their education.

The decision whether to exercise discretion will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Reviews for young people entitled to travel support

Where young people are identified as only able to access their post 16 education with support from the Council, the Local Authority will decide the most appropriate travel support.

All travel support will be reviewed as part of the annual review of needs and if appropriate as part of an early review. Travel support may be withdrawn or amended if circumstances change.

Applying for Local Authority travel support

The council will look to complete the assessment of applications in a timely fashion, aiming to put in place travel arrangements for those entitled at the earliest opportunity. However, it may take up to six weeks to process, and families should be prepared to make their own interim travel arrangements if necessary.

All requests for travel support for young people must have a completed application form.

How to apply for school or college travel assistance | South Gloucestershire (southglos.gov.uk)

While an application is being processed parent/carers will be responsible for making their own travel arrangements, the Council will not compensate parent/carers during the assessment process for any costs incurred.

During periods of high demand, such as the build-up to the new academic year, timescales for processing applications may be extended. Families are advised to apply for support with travel at the earliest opportunity to ensure arrangements are in place when they are required.

To try to reduce disruption to the service and inform effective planning, the Council is implementing cut off dates for applications made for arrangements to begin for the next academic year. The beginning of the academic year is the most critical time with regards to school travel and we aim to promote continuity in the service we provide to Children and Young People.

Late applications may still receive travel support, however, this may be delayed for the start of the academic year. The arrangements may be interim or temporary solutions that have been sought in the short term and will be subject to review/change.

Cut-off dates will be published well in advance via the Council's local offer, which is available on the Council's website. Where possible, we will also correspond with parent/carers in writing via mail/email informing them of the exact dates.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application with explanation of the reasoning of the decision in accordance with this policy.

Appeals Process

All applications for post 16 travel support are considered in line with South Gloucestershire's written policy criteria. An appeal can be submitted where an applicant wishes to challenge a decision about the travel support arrangements offered, and/or the eligibility for assistance or any other aspect of home to school/college travel arrangements where appellants feel that exceptional circumstances apply. The appeal process has two stages:

Stage One:

An appeal will be considered and determined by an appropriate senior officer not previously involved in consideration of the case.

The consideration of an appeal will take into account:

- the law on home to school/college travel assistance;
- South Gloucestershire policy on home to school/college travel assistance;
- the original application for assistance, its administrative assessment and refusal;
- the exceptional circumstance set out in the appeal and any supporting documentation.

The consideration and determination of an appeal will include:

- first, if the administrative refusal was in error by reference to law/policy it can be overturned;
- secondly, if the administrative refusal was correct, an appeal can be upheld if the personal circumstances set out in the appeal are such as to warrant an exceptional decision being made to award assistance with transport.

Stage Two:

If the appellant remains dissatisfied with the decision of the reviewing/appeal officer, then the matter can be further referred to an independent appeal panel established by the Council.

Parent/carer(s) or child or young person have 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. The written request should detail why the parent/carer(s) or child, or young person believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent/carer(s) or child or young person believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carer(s) or child or young person's request, an independent appeal panel considers written and verbal representations from both the parent/carer(s)/child or young person and officers involved in the case and gives a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days).

Further details of the appeal process or to request an appeal please contact admissions@transport@southglos.gov.uk.