



# **DRAFT Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2021/22**

Name of Local Authority: Buckinghamshire Council

Department Responsible: Children's Services



**Important note:**

**Key changes to the current Statement are highlighted in yellow throughout this draft Post-16 Transport Policy Statement**

# Post-16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2021-22

## 1. Introduction

Buckinghamshire Council has a duty to prepare and publish an annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. This statement specifies the arrangements for transport that the Council considers it necessary to make in order to facilitate the attendance of sixth form students receiving education or training. The statement is published in line with the statutory duties under the Education Act 1996, including s.509AA and s.509AB and takes into account the Department for Education statutory guidance – Post-16 transport to education and training, January 2019.

The Council has developed a Needs Analysis which supports and has informed this Post-16 Transport Policy Statement.

Buckinghamshire's Post-16 Transport Policy Statement provides information on travel and transport arrangements that are available to young people **who are above statutory school age, which ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they turn 16.**

The Council's ambition is that every student in the county achieves their full potential. We are committed to ensuring that those **aged 16 and over as explained above** (including those with Education, Health and Care Plans up to the age of 25) have access to educational opportunities at school, college or other education settings. Part of this ambition is for as many students as possible to travel independently using a sustainable form of transport.

This Statement applies to any young person who is living in Buckinghamshire. Students who do not live in Buckinghamshire should refer to the Transport Policy and Statement issued by their home Local Authority.

## 2. Consultation

**In developing this statement we have considered feedback received over the last 12 months. We have worked with parent representatives from FACT Bucks, the parent / carer forum, to revise the statement and Home to School Transport Policy. In addition, a discussion group was held with parents/carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in August 2020 that helped to shape this new document.**

**The consultation invited feedback from the following stakeholders:**

- Any other Local authorities considered appropriate (e.g. cross border transport);
- Governing bodies of schools and Further Education institutions;
- The council's internal Transport Service;
- Students of sixth form age at the time of the Transport Policy Statement and their parents/carers;

- Other bodies including education and training providers, higher education institutions, transport companies and authorities operating in the locality, public sector bodies, community groups, voluntary organisations and groups/organisations with an interest in disability issues.

This statement is consulted on each year prior to publication by 31 May.

### **3. Travel Assistance**

Students are now required to be in education, employment or training until their 18th birthday, which could involve mixing full-time work with study, following an apprenticeship, continuing full time in school or college, or combining part-time training with volunteering. There has not, however, been any change to statutory school age **which ends at the end of the academic year in which the student turns 16.**

Under the current law, there is no automatic entitlement to free transport from home to school or to another educational setting once a student **is 16 and over.** **However, the Council is required to facilitate the attendance of all those of sixth form age i.e. those students in school years 12- 14 who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday.** This may involve travel assistance but the Council does not have to provide this assistance free of charge. Responsibility for attendance lies with the student and their parents/carers.

**Where a student with SEND starts a new course at aged 19 or older, any transport assistance is free of charge, as they are Adult Learners.**

### **4. Fares, Passes and Travel Cards**

#### **4.1 Bus and Rail Operators in Buckinghamshire**

Most bus and rail transport operators in Buckinghamshire offer special tickets for students. Further details are outlined below. Please contact the travel operator direct for further information.

##### [Arriva](#)

Arriva offer daily, weekly monthly and annual zone tickets for their buses. Students are entitled to a student discount on production of a valid student card i.e. an NUS, ISIC, or College ID card.

##### [Chiltern Railways](#)

Chiltern Railways offer season tickets for periods of a week, month, over a month or a year.

Holders of monthly or longer season tickets or Travelcard season tickets valid to High Wycombe station can use their ticket to travel free on local Arriva buses within the High Wycombe area at any time of day, 7 days a week.

Holders of monthly or longer season tickets or Travelcard season tickets valid to Aylesbury station can use their ticket to travel free on local Arriva, Silver Rider, Water Rider and Purple Route 7 buses within the Aylesbury area at any time of day, 7 days a week.

Holders of monthly or longer season tickets or Travelcard season tickets valid to Aylesbury Vale Parkway station can use their ticket to travel free on Monday to Fridays during peak times on Arriva bus 16 to/from Steeple Claydon, Westcott, Quanton and Waddesdon.

### [Carousel Buses](#)

Carousel Buses offer daily, weekly and monthly zone tickets. There are a number of special discounts for Buckinghamshire College Group students.

### [16-25 Railcards](#)

16-25 Railcards are available for full-time students between the ages of 16 and 25 years. This allows the holder to receive one-third off most off-peak rail fares. **It should be noted that this option would not be suitable for journeys to school as the card is not valid until after the school day starts.**

### [Citizen Card](#)

Buckinghamshire residents aged 16 and 17 are entitled to the 'Make More Citizen Card'. The Citizen Card entitles card holders to travel on buses at a reduced single fare within Arriva's Aylesbury and Wycombe zones and the Carousel Bus zones 1, 2 and 3. The card is only valid for journeys after 9am on weekdays and all day at weekends. It should be noted that this option would not be suitable for journeys to school as the card is not valid until after the school day starts.

### **Other transport providers**

Other transport providers may offer discount schemes. Please contact them direct for details.

### **Public Bus timetables**

For details on bus timetables please visit [here](#)

## 4.2 Travel Schemes offered by colleges

The following colleges operate their own travel schemes. Please contact the colleges directly for further information.

- [Buckinghamshire College Group](#) (campuses at Aylesbury, Wycombe & Amersham)
- [Berkshire College of Agriculture](#) (BCA)
- [Buckinghamshire University Technical College](#) (UTC)
- [Henley College](#)

Other colleges may be able to assist with transport costs. For further information please contact the Student Services department of the college.

## 4.3 Spare Seats Scheme for Post-16 Students

The Council contracts with companies to provide bus transport for students who are eligible for free transport. Spare seats on these vehicles may be sold where there are seats remaining after the allocation of seats to qualifying students have been made.

Spare seats on Council provided transport are extremely limited. All purchased seats will be subject to the seat being withdrawn with 5 working days' notice if it is required for a pupil who is eligible.

On routes where spare seats are available and where applications are received by the advertised deadline, spare seats will be prioritised and allocated in the following priority order:

1. Renewal applications
2. Looked After Children or former Looked After Children who have been adopted
3. Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
4. Children of Armed Forces personnel - in line with our duty as part of the Buckinghamshire Armed Forces Covenant
5. Siblings of students allocated a place in Priority 1
6. All others - on a first come first served basis from date of application

Detailed terms and conditions on the Spare Seats Scheme are published on our website.

The travel pass provided for this transport is the responsibility of the pupil. If lost or damaged, replacements will be provided but this will carry an administration charge.

If your travel pass provided by the Council is lost or stolen, you will need to contact us online to [request a replacement](#). You must quote your student reference number, name, address and date of birth.

## 5. Help with Travel Costs

### Bursaries

Families are able to explore bursary funding with the school or college to help offset the cost of transport.

There are two types of bursaries which students are able to apply to for financial assistance. One of these is discretionary. These are described below.

### The 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary Fund

A key priority of the Government is to close the gap in attainment between those from different economic backgrounds, and to ensure every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16-19 education and/or training.

Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups are available up to £1,200 a year for the most vulnerable groups. This includes:

- young people in care;
- care leavers;
- young people claiming Income Support or Universal Credit **because they are financially supporting themselves or supporting themselves and dependents;**
- young people receiving the following payments **in their own right:**
  - Disability Living Allowance **OR** Personal Independence Payment;**As well as:**
  - Employment and Support Allowance **OR** Universal Credit.

The bursary is paid if young people meeting the above eligibility criteria are in financial need. Applications are facilitated through the school or other educational setting which the student attends. Enquiries should be directed to the school or college.

Further information on the eligibility criteria for this bursary can be found on the [government website](#)

### Discretionary bursaries

Discretionary funding may also be available to support students in accessing education and training. This funding is managed locally and schools and other educational settings are able to award this funding to any student who is facing genuine financial barriers to participation. Schools/educational settings set their own eligibility criteria and decide on how much is paid. They set their own conditions for students to meet in order to receive a discretionary bursary. This might include standards of behaviour or attendance.

To find out if you are eligible for a discretionary bursary please contact your school or other educational setting.

## **6. Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged 16-19**

### **6.1 Criteria for travel assistance for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

To qualify for travel assistance from the Council, the following criteria will be considered. Transport needs will be assessed as part of the Education, Health and Care Plan annual review process.

Transport assistance is based on travel from the home address, as defined in the Home to School Transport Policy, to the educational placement named in section I of the Education, Health & Care Plan. Transport can only be provided to one placement.

- The student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a named school or educational setting. Should a student choose to attend a setting that is not defined as the nearest suitable setting in the EHCP due to parental preference, then this may impact on the level of travel assistance provided;
- The student is unable to travel on public transport due to their Special Educational Needs, disability or mobility difficulty;
- The programme of learning is full-time (i.e. at least 540 plus guided learning (planned and funded) hours per year);
- The student lives more than 3 miles walking distance from the school or educational setting as measured by the Council, or they are unable to walk the distance because of their Special Educational Needs, disability or mobility difficulty.

## **7. Travel assistance available for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged 16-19**

Students who have been assessed and are eligible for travel assistance will be allocated transport or travel assistance appropriate to their assessed needs. This may be specialised if they require equipment to enable them to be transported.

### **7.1 Personal Transport Budgets**

Students with SEND who are eligible for transport are able to apply for a Personal Transport Budget. This can be awarded at the discretion of the Council and is a sum of money to support the student to travel from home to their school or educational setting.

A Personal Transport Budget is paid on the assumption that students are over 16 years old, and they attend a full-time programme of learning that is at least 540 guided learning (planned and funded) hours per year. If a student receives a Personal Transport Budget part way through the school year, or attends education on a part-time basis, the total payment would be on a pro rata basis to account for the reduced amount of time that a parent/carer would be responsible for transport arrangements.

### **What is a Personal Transport Budget?**

The Personal Transport Budget allows families to have the freedom and flexibility to make their own travel arrangements rather than travelling on a vehicle contracted by the Council. It is not a short-term alternative while a transport application is being processed.

A Personal Transport Budget could be used in many ways, including:

- To pay for fuel and/or running costs on a family vehicle that is used to transport a student to school/educational setting;
- Paying for a shared taxi with other students;
- Paying for another person to take a sibling to school to free a parent/carer up to transport the student with SEND;
- Buying travel passes for other children in the family so that they can travel to and from school, allowing the parent/carer to transport the student with SEND;
- Paying for a travel pass for the student with SEND;
- Paying for childcare for another child to allow a parent/carer to take the student with SEND to school/educational setting;
- Working with the school to join up transport options with other parents (e.g. car share), encouraging a sense of community.

### **Conditions of use for Personal Transport Budgets**

If a parent/carer uses the Personal Transport Budget to employ someone (e.g. for childcare), then they will be responsible for complying with relevant rules regarding Tax and National Insurance, Employment Law, Insurance, Health and Safety or any other relevant rules or legislation in force at that time. In addition, they would be responsible for any checks carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on anyone that is employed.

Similarly, if a parent/carer uses the Personal Transport Budget to enter into contracts with organisations e.g. after school clubs, or individuals, the parent/carer would be responsible for complying with the terms and conditions of those contracts. This may include payment arrangements or notice of cancellation.

Personal Transport Budgets cannot be used in the following circumstances:

- To buy or utilise space on transport services from the Council;
- For any purpose that does not enable the student to travel to/from the school/educational setting;
- For any activity that is illegal, unlawful or unsafe;
- For other purposes that may bring the Council into disrepute.

To apply for a Personal Transport Budget the student will need to:

- Live within the area where Buckinghamshire is the local council;
- Have an Education, Health and Care Plan;
- Attend the school or education setting outlined in the Education, Health and Care Plan, or the nearest school or setting if more than one is named due to parental preference;
- Comply with the eligibility criteria described in section 6.

All children with an Education, Health and Care plan in the same family would be considered when agreeing the amount awarded via a Personal Transport Budget.

A Personal Transport Budget maybe withdrawn in some circumstances, including if:

- A student's attendance falls below 90% (this aligns with the government definition of "Persistent Absence" in school-age children which is an absence rate of 90% and below). It is recognised that attendance for some students may be affected by their medical needs;
- A student regularly arrives late at school in the mornings or in an unfit state to learn;
- There is a change to national legislation and/or the Council's policies.

### **Agreeing the amount of Personal Transport Budgets**

The following factors will be taken into consideration alongside discussion with the family, to determine the appropriate personal budget amount:

- The special educational needs and disabilities of the student;
- The travel distance;
- How the student might travel to school;
- The time the journey takes;
- Whether the student is able to travel alone or if they need to be accompanied;
- The age of the student;

- Whether any specialist equipment might be required.

The minimum amount that would be awarded with a Personal Transport Budget is 45p per mile. The cost of two return journeys per day of attendance at school or setting (i.e. all four legs of the journeys) would be included in the Personal Transport Budget amount. As every family's circumstances are different we are unable to determine an approximate upper limit. In many cases it may exceed the amount a family would pay if the Council were organising the transport on their behalf.

## **7.2 Mileage Allowance for SEND**

Mileage Allowances were previously available as a type of travel assistance. This is now incorporated into the Personal Transport Budget.

## **7.3 Transport during the school/college day**

Transport will not be provided for journeys made during the school day. Where students attend medical or dental appointments or off-site provision arranged by the school, then the school or parent/carer, as appropriate, must make arrangements and pay for transport.

## **7.4 Transport timing**

Appropriate transport arrangements will be made based on the age and needs of the child. Pick-up and drop-off times cannot be rescheduled to take into account other family commitments. Parents/carers who are unable to be home at the specified pick-up and drop-off times and location will have to make alternative arrangements.

Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child is at the pick-up/setting down point near their home and for accompanying their child to/from this point where required.

## **8. Options for Travel Assistance**

Views are invited on the following three alternative options for travel assistance for students aged 16 to 19 with SEND. The views of all stakeholders are invited:  
[yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/schools/htst-2021-consultation](https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/schools/htst-2021-consultation)

**Following consultation the Council will adopt ONE of the options below from April 2021 for the academic year 2021/22.**

### **8.1 Option 1 (Distance Banded system – minimal change to the existing system used)**

Under the current system, students aged 16-18 who are eligible for Council transport pay an annual payment that contributes to the overall cost incurred by the Council. The charge is based on the distance between the student's home and the school or educational

placement, as named in the Education, Health and Care Plan. This charge can be paid as a one-off annual payment or over 8 monthly direct debit payments.

The 2019/20 charges are set out below. The amounts were in line with charges for mainstream students on Spare Seats Scheme transport at the time the Policy was implemented. The charges are subject to inflation each year.

Distance Band	Annual Charge	Monthly Direct Debit
Band 1 (under 4 miles)	£706	£91.50
Band 2 (4 to 4.99 miles)	£823.60	£106.20
Band 3 (5 to 6.99 miles)	£941.20	£120.90
Band 4 (7 to 9.99 miles)	£1,060.90	£135.86
Band 5 (10 miles or more)	£1,179.55	£150.69

Option 1 would maintain the current distance banded model subject to the following changes and clarifications:

- Charges are extended to include students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged 19 and over who are continuing with an educational course they started prior to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. If they begin a new course of study after their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, the charge will not apply;
- Full payment will be required for each student using Council organised transport, regardless of whether they are from the same family or are travelling in the same vehicle;
- Where evidence of financial hardship has been provided a minimum discount of 25% will automatically be applied;
- Payments need to be started within 28 days of transport being confirmed in writing. Any non-payment will result in the withdrawal of transport at the end of the first half term. Parents/carers will be notified in writing the date transport will end. Transport will not be reinstated until any outstanding charges are paid.

## 8.2 Option 2 (A choice of annual fee or Personal Transport Budget)

With this option, families of students who are eligible for travel assistance have a choice of how they can arrange this. (See section 6.1 above for details of eligibility criteria.)

- a) Families can apply for a Personal Transport Budget which allows them to arrange transport for the student themselves. Further information on personal budgets can be found in section 7 above. All eligible students requesting a Personal Transport Budget

would be awarded one unless the cost to the Council exceeded the cost of arranging the transport or if suitable arrangements cannot be made.

## **OR**

b) Transport can be arranged by the Council for an annual fee of £900 irrespective of the distance from home to school. This fee reflects the midpoint of the existing distance banded approach and is in line with other local authority transport schemes. The charge would be on a pro-rata basis where required to reflect the number of days a student attends a school/educational setting.

Where families could demonstrate financial hardship, the annual fee would be reduced by a third to £600, and on a pro-rata basis according to the number of days travelled. To qualify for a reduced payment, the following would be required:

- Evidence of Income Support / Universal Credit.
- Evidence that your household income is less than £21,000 per year.

In all cases a minimum charge would be applied, equivalent to 1 day per week for all students wishing to have transport organised, including those in 38 or 52 week placements. Therefore the minimum amount any family would be charged is £180.

Families may wish to pursue financial support through the bursary schemes that are managed by schools and other educational settings. Where this is the case, any bursary awards granted by the school would be paid directly to the family.

Payment will be based on the number of days that the student will be attending their education setting at the beginning of the academic year. These cannot be swapped or reduced once the transport has been arranged; however, it may be possible to arrange transportation for extra days for an additional cost.

Payments need to be made within 28 days of transport being confirmed in writing. Any non-payment will result in the withdrawal of transport at the end of the first half term. Parents/carers will be notified in writing the date transport will end. Transport will not be reinstated until any outstanding charges are paid.

### **8.3 Option 3 (Personal Transport Budgets Only)**

With this option, all students eligible for transport would apply for a Personal Transport Budget as described in section 7 above and all eligible students would be awarded a Personal Transport Budget unless the cost to the Council exceeded the cost of arranging the

transport or the Council agrees exceptionally to make the transport provision for the family through its Transport Exceptions process. In these circumstances, families would be required to make a payment of £900 per year towards the overall cost (see section 7.1 on Personal Transport Budgets). In exceptional circumstances, if a parent or carer feels they are unable to use a Personal Transport Budget, then an application can be made to the Transport Exceptions Panel for the Council to consider.

#### **8.4 Financial Hardship**

In all the above options where the Council has arranged transport, families could apply for financial assistance if they are able to demonstrate financial hardship. To qualify for a reduced payment, the following would be required

- Evidence of Income Support / Universal Credit
- Evidence that your household income is less than £21,000

#### **8.5 Circumstances where payments for transport are not required**

In some circumstances transport is provided free of charge. These are:

- Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities who are Looked After Children (LAC);
- Students who are in receipt of Continuing Health Care funding that covers their transport;
- Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities who have started a new educational course at 19. For these students transport to educational placements becomes free until they are 25 or leave education or training completely as Adult Learners.

## 9. Independent Travel Training

The Council is working with schools and colleges to promote a programme of Independent Travel Training to support students as they transition to adulthood. This training will help students develop the skills, confidence and knowledge to use transport safely. It will cover topics such as road safety, personal safety, money management, journey planning and coping strategies.

For some students Independent Travel Training (ITT) would not be appropriate due to their complex needs, but where students have the potential to benefit from Independent Travel Training we would support them to take part in the programme.

## 10. Further information

### 10.1 Council arranged transport for students from the same household

For families with more than one student in the household with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, e.g. siblings, who have transport organised by the Council, full payment is required for each student. This is the case regardless of whether they are travelling in the same vehicle or not.

### 10.2 Non-payment of charges

Payments are required for transport organised by the Council (except for the circumstances outlined in section 8.5). Payments need to be made within 28 days of transport being confirmed in writing. Any non-payment will result in the withdrawal of transport at the end of the first half term. Parents/carers will be notified in writing the date transport will end. Transport will not be reinstated until any outstanding charges are paid.

## 11. Support for students with SEND aged 19-25

There are additional responsibilities under Section 508F and Section 508G of the Education Act 1996 for the Council to provide transport for some students. These students must meet the following criteria:

- Be an adult aged between 19 and 25 years with an EHCP;
- Live in the Local Authority area;
- Be attending:
  - A further education setting;
  - An education setting maintained or assisted by the local authority and providing further or higher education (or both);
  - An educational setting outside the further and higher education sectors, where the local authority has secured education or training and/or boarding accommodation for that learner.

- The educational setting must be named in the student's Education, Health and Care Plan;
- The educational setting must be more than 3 miles away from the student's home address, unless the student is unable to walk that distance as a result of their SEND, even if accompanied, or the route is unsafe.
- The student is unable due to his or her special educational needs and disabilities to use public transport independently.

Travel assistance would continue until the end of the academic year in which the student turns 25.

For advice on financial support to access higher education please contact Student Finance England on 0300 100 0607.

### **11.1 Motability Allowance**

Students aged 19-25 with a special educational need or disability may be eligible for a Motability Allowance, depending on the nature of their primary need. For further details please visit their website [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)

## **12. Students without an Education, Health and Care Plan aged 19-25**

Students without an Education, Health and Care Plan aged 19-25 may be able to receive travel assistance to their education or training setting. This will be dependent on the student being assessed as eligible under the Care Act 2014 and education forming part of the assessed need. Any travel assistance considered would be subject to the [Charging Policy for Non-Residential Services](#)

All enquiries with regard to this travel assistance should be made through the [Community Reablement Team](#)

## **13. How to appeal a decision**

The Council has a 2 stage review process for parents/carers who wish to challenge a decision about:

- the transport arrangements offered;
- the pupil's eligibility;
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances;
- the suitability of the route.

The appeal process is to challenge the above matters. If you have a concern about how the arrangements are being delivered, you should use the complaints process.

### **Stage 1**

Parents/carers have 20 working days to request a review of our decision about home to school transport. Parents should write to us, detailing why the decision should be reviewed, giving details of any personal/family circumstances and including any supporting evidence to be considered.

The decision will be reviewed by a senior officer or via the Transport Exceptions Panel. Within 20 working days of receipt of this letter parents will be advised in writing of the appeal decision.

### **Stage 2 - review by an Independent Appeal Panel**

Parents/carers have 20 working days from the receipt of our Stage 1 written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to Stage 2. Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents/carers request, an Independent Appeal Panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in the case and will give a detailed written notification of the outcome within 5 working days of the panel meeting.

The Independent Appeal Panel is made up of trained volunteers who have experience of transport issues. These volunteers are independent of the Council.

### **Stage 3 - complaint to Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

Parents/carers can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman only if they consider that:

- there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules;
- if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled.

For further information please contact the admissions team.

## **14. How to make a complaint**

Any pupil, parent or carer wishing to make a complaint relating to Home to School Transport should complete the [school transport 'Contact Us Form'](#).

Formal complaints should be made through our Feedback and Complaints Procedure.

## **15. Further Information and Key Contact Details**

If you require further information please contact the relevant Service as follows:

For eligibility enquiries for students with SEND please contact your named Education, Health and Care Coordinator or the relevant area team:

[Aylesbury SEND Area Hub](#)

[Chesham and South Bucks SEND Area Hub](#)

[Wycombe SEND Area Hub](#)

For Council Transport Enquiries please contact [Client & Public Transport Services contact us form](#)

For more information on school transport please visit [our website](#).

For a replacement travel pass please [request a replacement](#).

To apply for a Personal Transport Budget please use the [Contact Us form](#).

Additional Guidance:

[Government guidance on Post-16 Transport](#)

[Further information on additional support for subsidised college transport](#)