

Local Authority Travel Assistance Policy Statement – Academic Year 2025/26

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| Travel assistance Policy Statement for learners aged 16-18 in further education and continuing learners aged 19 and over |
| Name of Local Authority: Shropshire Council Department Responsible: Children's Services |
| 1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives (this section should give an overview/statement of intent of what the Local Authority's travel assistance policy is and what the subsequent desired outcomes are). |
| (Please see attached guidance notes which contain the Policy Statement & Main Objectives) |
| 2. Please provide details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidised, passes or travel cards available for learners aged 16-18 and who provides them. Please provide details of any costs to the learner. |
| <p>Shropshire Council provide travel passes for entitled students who normally reside in Shropshire and who meet the Post/16 travel assistance criteria. The agreed level of charges for the 2025/26 academic year are as follows. The annual charge will be £1140. Families may also contribute for a termly pass. For families on defined benefits, a contribution towards the cost of the travel assistance will be £330 for each entitled student, with the option of paying termly.</p> <p>The 16-19 Bursary Scheme provides financial support for learners aged 16-19 to access education or training. Schools and colleges are responsible for awarding bursaries and the amount paid. They can also apply to the Learner Support Service for additional funding for vulnerable students.</p> <p>Details of the Bursary scheme are available on the Direct Gov website at: www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund</p> |
| 3. What times during the day can learners use their travel pass or obtain Concessionary fares? |
| Travel passes to school or sixth form/college are normally issued for one returnable journey a day. This would be to travel into college up until 12 |

noon and return home after 12 noon. However, many bus transport operators offer unlimited travel on their network and students may wish to contact their local operators to find out what options are available to them.

4. Please confirm that support will continue to be made available to learners who reach 19 whilst continuing on a course.

Where the student becomes 19 years of age during their course, travel assistance will cease at the end of the academic year in which the 19th birthday falls.

For those with special educational needs and or disabilities please see policy on local offer pages

5. How will learners be assessed to see if they are eligible for support?
e.g. means-testing or must they be on benefits?

Applications will be considered within the terms of the Post/16 entitlement criteria and where this is met, assistance will be offered by issuing travel passes which can be used on appropriate public transport networks and/or college buses. This is subject to the Post/16 contribution being received or proof of benefit & the appropriate payment (see below)

A contribution will also be required for students who have special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan where travel assistance has been agreed by the Authority. Please see Section 6.

Where families are in receipt of the following defined benefits listed below and the student qualifies for Post/16 travel assistance, a contribution of £330 will be required:

Income Based Job Seekers Allowance

Income Support

Free School Meals (as authorised by the Authority, not the school that your child is attending.)

Child Tax Credit with annual income, as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs, of less than £16,190 on 1st September 2024 or subsequently on the date of application.

Income related Employment and Support Allowance

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)

The guaranteed element of pension credit

If you are not happy with the decision about your entitlement to help with Post/16 travel assistance, complaints should be sent, in the first instance, to the Senior Entitlement Officer via email schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk or via the post to Passenger Transport Group, 107 Longden Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9DS, whereby the application will then be reviewed.

The complainant would need to submit a statement as to why they believe the Council is failing to exercise their duty not to provide Post/16 travel assistance under sections 509AA to 509AD of the Education Act 1996. Each appeal is considered on its individual merits and is not intended to set a precedent for similar cases.

Every effort will be made to resolve complaints at Stage 1.

If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 1 then the complainant can refer the matter to a Stage 2 Transport Panel review.

Finally, should this matter remain unresolved, an appeal can be made to the Local Government Ombudsman.

This appeals process is in line with guidance from the Department for Education.

Once the appeals procedure has been exhausted, that decision is final and other than communication of the decision and the reason behind it, no further correspondence will be entered into, unless the appellant produces further evidence to be considered.

6. What help do you provide for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those over 19 or learners facing other difficulties in Following their courses?

Should an applicant have special educational needs and/or an Education, Health and Care Plan then you will need to complete an alternative application form so that the Authority can better assess the needs of the applicant. Once a placement at an educational facility has been secured an application will need to be assessed by the Specialist Travel Team.

Please take a look at our 'How to apply' page or contact us via email special.transport.team@shropshire.gov.uk should you have any queries or require further assistance.

The contribution scheme for the 2025/26 academic year for pupils of discretionary age (0-4 and 16-19). The main charge is £1140 per year. For families on defined benefits (please see below), a contribution towards the cost of the travel assistance will be £330 for the academic year.

Where families are in receipt of the following defined benefits listed below

and the student qualifies for assistance, a contribution of £330 will be required:

Income Based Job Seekers Allowance

Income Support

Free School Meals (as authorised by the Authority, not the school that your child is attending.)

Child Tax Credit with annual income, as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs, of less than £16,190 on 1st September 2024 or subsequently on the date of application.

Income related Employment and Support Allowance

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)

The guaranteed element of pension credit

Travel assistance is currently provided based on an assessment of the applicant's individual needs and the Authority will provide one returnable journey a day.

All applicants are assessed to make sure they meet the Post/16 travel assistance criteria.

Learners aged 19 or over

Whilst the Council actively encourages young adults to participate in education and training, to progress their pathway to employment and maximise their independence, it is expected that the vast majority of adult learners will make their own travel arrangements and meet the cost of those arrangements.

However, in exceptional circumstances the council may conclude that it is necessary to make arrangements for the provision of transport.

Please take a look at our 'How to apply' page or email special.transport.team@shropshire.gov.uk should you have any queries or require further assistance

7. Do you provide mobility/independence training for learners who face Difficulty with transport?

A number of schools and colleges provide travel training and support to students; schools can be contacted directly for details of their provision. Students with special educational needs and/or an EHCP can be assessed for Travel Training and this will be provided by the Local Authority.

8. When should learners start to apply for travel assistance?

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| <p>Applications are available to be made now and can be made in a number of ways. Shropshire students wishing to apply over the telephone, can do so by contacting Shropshire Council's Customer Service Centre on 0345 678 9008. Applications can also be made online at www.shropshire.gov.uk/school-transport/available-support/post-16/. Should a paper copy of the form be required, the applicant should contact Passenger Transport Group on the above telephone number or the college, who will be able to assist with this.</p> <p>We would advise students who wish to apply for Post/16 travel assistance to complete an application form as <u>early as possible</u> to avoid any delay as this is our busiest time of the year.</p> <p>Should your application be successful, we would also recommend students make a contribution asap. In most cases, this should ensure passes will be available to use at the beginning of the new term.</p> |
| <p>9. What help can learners apply for if they need to travel to a course that is beyond your Local Authority area?</p> |
| <p>Travel assistance is provided to students who undertake vocational courses outside the Local Authority area where this is the nearest college offering the course available (subject to the distance criteria).</p> |
| <p>10. What help is available for learners who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to stay away?</p> |
| <p>No assistance is currently provided for students who live beyond the daily travelling distance and need to stay away. However, if the student has previously held a statement of special needs, any exceptional requests for transport assistance may be considered on an individual basis.</p> |
| <p>11. Please provide information about all points of contact for learners seeking transport support, e.g. Local Authority/college, bus company contact. Please include any websites and e-mail addresses.</p> |
| <p>Passenger Transport Group (Shropshire Council): Web: https://shropshire.gov.uk/school-transport/available-support/post-16/ https://shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/sen-transport/ (Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) Email: schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk Special.transport.team@shropshire.gov.uk</p> |

Shropshire Colleges:

Shrewsbury Colleges Group:

Web: www.scg.ac.uk

Email: info@scg.ac.uk

North Shropshire College:

Web: www.nsc.ac.uk

Email: admissions@nsc.ac.uk

Ludlow College:

Web: www.ludlow-college.ac.uk

Email: enquiries@hlcollege.ac.uk

Transport Operators:

Arriva Midlands: www.arrivabus.co.uk

Minsterley Motors: www.minsterleymotors.co.uk

Lakeside Coaches: www.lakesidecoaches.co.uk

Tanat Valley Coaches: www.tanat.co.uk

Boultons of Shropshire: www.boultonsofshropshire.co.uk

Bennetts Travel: www.bennettstravelcranberryltd.co.uk

Celtic: www.celtic-travel.co.uk

Diamond: www.diamondbuses.com