

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement – Academic Year 2026/27

Introduction

Shropshire Council publishes this Post-16 Transport Policy Statement each year to explain the travel support available for young people of sixth form age and for eligible adult learners. It is intended to help learners and families understand what assistance may be available, how applications are assessed and what contribution may be required.

Local authorities do not have a general duty to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support. However, they must prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement setting out the arrangements they consider necessary to facilitate the attendance of learners of sixth form age and, where applicable, eligible adult learners. This statement should be read alongside the Council's wider school and college transport information and is reviewed annually.

This statement applies to young people aged 16 to 18 in education or training, continuing learners aged 19 and over who began their course before their 19th birthday, and young people aged 19 to 25 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan. It also applies to learners attending school sixth forms, further education colleges, specialist providers, apprenticeships and other education or training funded in line with the relevant legislation and guidance.

Although this statement applies to apprenticeships and other work-based learning, Shropshire Council does not provide travel assistance for these placements and learners are expected to make their own travel arrangements.

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.

Local authority details

Name of Local Authority: Shropshire Council

Department Responsible: Infrastructure

Aims and objectives

The Council aims to support participation in education and training by setting out clearly the travel and transport options available to post-16 learners. In doing so, it seeks to help families make informed choices, reduce transport barriers where support is considered necessary, and encourage young people to develop independence wherever this is appropriate and safe.

Eligibility for post-16 travel support

All applications for post-16 travel support are assessed on an annual basis. There is no automatic entitlement to travel assistance once a learner is over compulsory

school age, even where support may previously have been provided during secondary education.

Travel support may be considered where all of the following apply:

- the learner is a resident in Shropshire;
- the learner is aged 16 to 18 at the start of the course, or is a continuing learner who started the course before their 19th birthday;
- the learner is attending the designated or nearest appropriate post-16 provider for their home address, unless the required course or a comparable qualification is not available there;
- the distance between home and the school or college is 3 miles or more, measured by the shortest available walking route; and
- the learner meets the Council's post-16 travel support criteria and pays the required contribution, where applicable.

Travel assistance is not available for apprenticeships or other work-based learning placements, and learners are expected to make their own travel arrangements for these.

Transport assistance is not available for higher education courses. Where a suitable course is not available within Shropshire, applications to attend an out-of-county provider may be considered where that provider is the nearest appropriate provider offering the course or a comparable qualification. Such support will not normally be provided for travel to a provider located more than 20 miles beyond the Shropshire boundary. If a learner lives outside the Shropshire local authority boundary, they should apply to their home local authority.

Where joint admissions arrangements apply in Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury Colleges Group will be treated as serving the same attendance area as Shrewsbury Sixth Form College. The designated post-16 providers for Church Stretton, All Stretton and Little Stretton are Shrewsbury Colleges Group or Ludlow College. The Marches School is recognised as jointly serving the same attendance areas as North Shropshire College. The designated post-16 providers for Chirbury and the surrounding area are Shrewsbury Colleges Group or Ludlow College.

Families are encouraged to consider all available travel options before applying, including public transport season tickets, support available directly from schools and colleges, and any bursary or hardship funding that may be available from the learning provider.

Travel support available

Travel assistance will be offered in the form the Council considers most appropriate to meet the learner's circumstances. This may include:

- a pass for an existing public bus or rail service;
- a place on an existing Local Authority or contracted service, where seats are available; or
- a contribution towards travel costs to the nearest suitable boarding point or to the school or college, where no suitable service exists.

- The Council does not normally provide taxis under the post-16 travel support scheme.

Travel passes are normally issued for one return journey each day, Monday to Friday during term time, for the normal start and end of the college day. In most cases, passes may be used for travel to college up to 12 noon and for return travel after 12 noon.

The Council does not generally recommend purchasing a pass through the post-16 travel support scheme where suitable commercial tickets or operator arrangements are available directly to the learner, as these may offer a more flexible or cost-effective option.

Passes will not be issued until the required contribution has been received. Learners may need to pay fares until their pass is issued, and these interim costs are not refundable. If a learner starts a new course or moves address, a new application must be made.

No refund is available for days when a pass is not used or where transport does not operate because of severe weather or similar disruption. Families should also be aware that bus services may change during the academic year and the same service may not always remain available.

Contributions and financial support

For the 2026/27 academic year, the standard annual contribution for approved post-16 travel support is £1,140. This can be paid in full or in 3 termly instalments of £380. Payment can only be made after eligibility has been confirmed.

For families receiving qualifying benefits, the reduced annual contribution is £330, which can be paid in full or in 3 termly instalments of £110.

The qualifying benefits for the reduced contribution are:

- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Support
- Free School Meals, as authorised by the Authority
- Child Tax Credit with annual income, as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs, of less than £16,190
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit, provided annual net earned income is no more than £7,400, assessed by earnings from up to 3 of the most recent assessment periods
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit

Schools and colleges may also provide financial support through the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and other learner support arrangements. Learners should contact their school or college directly for details.

Details of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund are available on GOV.UK and from the learner's school or college.

Applying for support

Applications can be made online, by telephone on 0345 678 9008 or by requesting a paper form from the Council or the learner's college. Applications for the forthcoming academic year should be submitted from 1 June. Applications received by 31 July are more likely to be processed in time for the start of the academic year, but all applications will be considered in line with the policy in force for that academic year.

The Council aims to process applications for mainstream students within 2 weeks where all required information has been provided. Families are responsible for any interim travel costs while an application is being considered.

Applicants will normally be notified in writing, usually by email, whether support has been approved and what the next steps are. Where an application is approved, families should make the required contribution promptly so that passes can be issued as quickly as possible for the start of term.

If support is approved and it is later found that the learner does not meet the policy criteria, any pass issued may be withdrawn and any contribution refunded where appropriate.

Continuing learners who reach age 19 and learners over age 19

Where a learner turns 19 while continuing on a course that began before their 19th birthday, any agreed support will normally continue until the end of that course or academic year, subject to the Council's policy and any annual reassessment requirements.

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, for learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan, the Council may conclude that transport assistance is necessary. Further information is set out below.

Learners with special educational needs and disabilities

Learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan, should apply through the Specialist Travel Team so that individual needs can be assessed. Support is considered once a suitable education placement has been confirmed.

Travel support for these learners is provided on the basis of an assessment of individual need. Where support is agreed, it will normally cover one return journey each day. All applications are assessed to determine whether the learner meets the relevant criteria and whether transport is necessary to facilitate attendance. For 2026/27, the standard contribution for discretionary age learners, including eligible post-16 learners, is £1,140 per year. For families receiving qualifying benefits, the reduced contribution is £330 per year.

Learners aged 19 or over are generally expected to make their own travel arrangements and meet the associated costs. However, where a learner has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including where an Education, Health and Care Plan is maintained, the Council will consider whether transport assistance is necessary to enable attendance, based on the learner's individual circumstances and the relevant statutory duties and powers.

For full details of eligibility or schemes available, please go to:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/sen-transport/>

To request further assistance, email special.transport.team@shropshire.gov.uk

Independent travel training

Some schools and colleges provide travel training or support directly. Learners with special educational needs and/or an Education, Health and Care Plan may also be assessed for independent travel training through the local authority.

Sustainable travel

The Council encourages learners to use sustainable and independent travel options wherever these are appropriate and safe. This includes public transport, walking, cycling and independent travel training, taking account of the learner's age, needs, distance to travel and the availability of suitable routes and services.

Concessionary fares

Learners should check directly with public transport operators for any student, scholar or other concessionary fare schemes that may be available. Shropshire Council does not operate a separate concessionary fares scheme for post-16 learners beyond the travel support arrangements set out in this statement.

Out-of-county attendance and residential arrangements

Travel support may be considered where a learner needs to attend a course outside the Shropshire area because it is the nearest appropriate provider offering that course or a comparable qualification, subject to the Council's eligibility criteria. Such support will not normally be provided for travel to a provider located more than 20 miles beyond the Shropshire boundary.

The Council does not normally provide assistance for learners who need to live away from home because their course is beyond daily travelling distance. In exceptional cases, particularly where a learner has special educational needs or disabilities, requests may be considered individually.

Appeals

If an application is refused, the Council will explain the reasons in writing. Parents, carers or learners may request a review of that decision in writing, setting out the grounds on which they believe the decision should be reconsidered. Travel assistance will not normally be put in place while a review or appeal is being considered.

At stage 1, a senior officer from the Passenger Transport Group will review the original decision and any additional information provided in the written appeal. A

written outcome will normally be issued within 20 working days and will explain how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if appropriate.

At stage 2, if the matter is not resolved, a written request for review must be made within 20 working days of the stage 1 decision. An independent appeal panel will then consider the case and issue a written outcome, normally within 40 working days of the request being received.

Any request for an appeal should be sent in writing via email to schooltransport@shropshire.gov.uk or to the postal address: Passenger Transport Group, Shropshire Council, 107 Longden Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY3 9DS.

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about the way your application has been handled, the transport arrangements provided, or any other aspect of the service, you should use the Council's complaints procedure. Complaints do not replace the appeals process for challenging an eligibility or transport decision, but may be considered alongside it where appropriate. Details of how to complain can be found on our website here <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/feedback/corporate-complaints/>

Safety and supervision

Parents are fully responsible for the safety and care of their children until they board the transport at the designated pick-up point and, on the return journey, from the moment they alight from the vehicle at the designated drop-off point.

Points of contact

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

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

Select: <https://www.selectbusservices.com>

Bennetts Travel: www.bennettstravelcranberryltd.co.uk

Celtic: www.celtic-travel.co.uk

Diamond: www.diamondbuses.com

D&G: <https://portal.dgbus.co.uk>