



## **Post 16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2024-25**

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

## **Contents**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Who may receive free travel to college/school?**
- 3. If free travel is agreed what form of transport is offered?**
- 4. Is any help available for those who are not eligible for free travel?**
- 5. Is there any help available for those aged over 19?**
- 6. Is there any help for young parents?**
- 7. Is it possible for those aged 16 to 18 and those continuing learners who started their course before their 19th birthday to appeal for help with travel to college/school?**
- 8. Useful contact information**
- 9. Complaints**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a legal duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement covering those young people of sixth form age receiving education or training.
- 1.2 This policy statement details transport assistance that the council believes to be necessary for Oxfordshire residents of sixth form age who are receiving education or training. Therefore, this statement covers those young people in Oxfordshire aged 16 to 18 and those continuing learners who started their course before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- 1.3 Travel assistance may also be made available for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 19 up until they reach the age of 25 years.

## 2. Who may receive free travel to college/school?

- 2.1 Those young people beyond statutory school age who are aged 16 to 19 and have learning difficulties and/or disabilities will receive free travel when they attend the **nearest suitable educational placement** to their home address that has an available place and one of the following applies:
  - The distance from their home to the educational placement is over 3 miles.
  - The distance from their home to the educational placement is less than 3 miles and there is no available walking route.
  - It would not be reasonable to expect the young person to walk to the educational placement because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their learning difficulty and/or disability, or because of a temporary or long-term medical condition (evidence is required from a GP or Consultant).
- 2.2 The nearest suitable educational placement is one at which the young person's needs can be met. For those with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), this will be established by the School Transport Eligibility Team from the responses to the formal consultations with schools and colleges undertaken by the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Service. If a school or college responds to a consultation stating that need can be met that will establish that it is a suitable establishment. Preference for a particular course or establishment is normally not relevant to the decision on whether a school or college is considered to be the nearest suitable school or college.
- 2.3 If a young person attends an educational placement where there is more than one site, travel assistance will only be provided to the nearest of those sites at which their needs can be met. The council will not provide free travel between sites. Any dispute over whether the provision at a particular site "meets need" will be determined by confirmation from the school or college as to whether it can meet need at that particular site.
- 2.4 Those who wish to study a course at an alternative educational placement to the nearest one that can meet their needs, will be responsible for the cost and provision of any travel arrangements that will be required for them to attend.
- 2.5 The transport needs of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are assessed individually. Therefore, if free travel assistance is approved the travel arrangements will be made according to their needs.

- 2.6 An officer within the School Transport Eligibility Team is responsible for the assessment of eligibility for free travel assistance.
- 2.7 Where it is not possible to access Post 16 education, for example the nearest school or college is over 3 miles from the young person's home and there is no public transport service, the council may be able to assist with travel. In these circumstances, the young person, or their parent or carer should contact School Transport Eligibility at: [SchoolTransportEligibility@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolTransportEligibility@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- 2.8 Independent travel training for young people who face difficulties with transport may be provided on a one-to-one basis depending on the level of need and the availability of trainers.

### **3. If free travel is agreed what form of transport is offered?**

- 3.1 The council normally expects young people to use public transport (ordinary scheduled bus or train services) or, if this is unavailable, contracted transport such as a coach or minibus.
- 3.2 The council may agree to a taxi where:
- there is no public transport; or,
  - it would be too onerous to use public transport due to multiple changes of bus; or,
  - a young person is unable to travel on public transport or a contracted coach/minibus because of specific permanent or temporary disabilities/special needs; or,
  - the journey would take longer than 1 hour 15 minutes and it would be a significantly shorter journey time by taxi.
- 3.3 Wherever possible the council is committed to the use of shared travel arrangements. There are circumstances in which a young person will travel alone in a taxi, but this is normally only when there are no other young people to be carried on that route rather than because there is an actual requirement for the young person to travel alone.
- 3.4 Agreement to an actual requirement for the young person to travel alone normally requires an assessment by specialist officers within the Supported Transport Service or follows a successful Stage 1 or Stage 2 appeal.
- 3.5 Specialist tail-lift vehicles are provided for some young people but only when this has been assessed as necessary by the Supported Transport Service or following a successful transport appeal.
- 3.6 Travel assistance is normally only available at the beginning and end of the 'normal school day' of the school or college.
- 3.7 In most circumstances young people accessing Post 16 education will make their own travel arrangements to access their chosen school or college. They may walk, cycle, use public transport or the council's Spare Seat Scheme to travel to school or college.
- 3.8 For most young people any travel costs incurred will be their responsibility, or that of their parent or carer.

#### 4. Is any help available for those who are not eligible for free travel?

##### Oxfordshire's Spare Seat Scheme

- 4.1 Where the council has contracted dedicated school transport, and there are more seats in the vehicle than eligible travellers, it may be possible to purchase a seat through Oxfordshire's Spare Seat Scheme.
- 4.2 This is a paid service that is only available on existing transport and where there would be no additional cost to the council to add the young person to the journey
- 4.3 If a young person would like to be considered for any place available under the Spare Seat Scheme, they will need to apply. Further information on this scheme, including the cost and how to apply can be found here:  
[Paid home to school travel assistance \(spare seats scheme\) | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- 4.4 There is no guarantee that a seat will be available or will continue to be available for the duration of the period of study. It is important that young people consider how they may travel to school or college if this service is not available.
- 4.5 Seats on coaches provided for home-to-school transport are made available on payment of a distance related charge. The charges for the 2024/25 academic year are set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Post-16 Charges**

<b>Spare Seats Scheme Charge</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
Less than 3 miles from home to school/college	£433.40 per annum
More than 3 miles from home to school/college	£806.30 per annum

- 4.6 The charge will depend on the distance from a young person's home to their school or college. The distance from home to school or college will be measured along the shortest route available to the public. This may not necessarily be a driving route.
- 4.7 If there are more requests to pay for seats on a route than there are seats available, they will be allocated in the descending order of priority shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Priority for Spare Seat Scheme**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Category</b>
1	Those with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan naming the school
2	Looked After Children
3	Years 12 and 13 (if there is no available service bus route)
4	Those in receipt of Free School Meals or whose parent or carer is in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit
5	Those who travelled on the route the previous term
6	By year group, in ascending order of priority from Reception to Year 11 (or to Year 13 if there is an available service bus route)

*\* Where there are more applicants than places in any of the above categories, priority will be given to those living closest to the destination school (measured using the shortest available route on Oxfordshire County Council's Geographic Information System)*

## **16 to 19 Bursary Fund**

- 4.8 To help with funding school and colleges have a fund provided by the government called the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund which is available for young people in Post 16 Education and can be used toward the cost of travelling to and from school or college.
- 4.9 There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:
- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups;
  - discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.
- 4.10 Further information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund is available at:  
[16 to 19 Bursary Fund: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund)
- 4.11 Schools and colleges manage 16-19 Bursary funds. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen institution to make an application.
- 4.12 Young people who are enrolled on courses for higher education qualifications who are aged under 19 are not eligible for support.

## **5. Is there any help available for those aged over 19?**

- 5.1 Applications for travel assistance for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged between 19 and 24 years of age (inclusive) will be considered on an individual basis for continuing learners who started their course before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. An assessment will be made taking account the specific circumstances of the applicant and the case for assistance with travel.
- 5.2 Where travel assistance is agreed, it will normally continue during the agreed course of study until the end of the academic year in which their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs. However, travel assistance will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel will be encouraged.
- 5.3 More information about Oxfordshire County Council's Local Offer for young people attending education or training can be found here:  
[Support for young people 16-25 years with SEND | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- 5.4 Further helpful information is contained in the following Moving into Adulthood online Handbook at: [OxFSN | Moving into Adulthood](#)

## **6. Is there any help for young parents?**

- 6.1 For young parents aged under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while they are 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 a childcare place over the summer holidays.
  - taking the student's child to the childcare provider.

6.2 Further information including how to apply can be found at  
[Care to Learn: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-to-learn-overview)

**7. Is it possible for those aged 16 to 18 and those continuing learners who started their course before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday to appeal for help with travel to college/school?**

7.1 If a young person or their parent or carer disagrees with the decision not to award free travel assistance it is possible to appeal. The council follows a two-stage appeals process.

7.2 This process is published on the council's webpages (with paper copies available on request) and sets out the two-stage process for those who wish to challenge a decision about:

- the transport arrangements offered.
- their young person's eligibility.
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances.
- the safety of the route.

**7.3 Stage one: Review by the Admissions and Transport Services Manager**

- A parent or carer has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's home to school transport decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why they believe the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances that they believe should be considered when the decision is reviewed.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of the written request the Admissions and Transport Services Manager will review the original decision and send a detailed written notification of the outcome of the review, setting out:
  - the nature of the decision reached.
  - how the review was conducted (including the standard followed, for example route safety assessments that have followed Road Safety GB guidance).
  - information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process.
  - what factors were considered.
  - the rationale for the decision reached.
  - information about how the parent can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate).

- Complex Stage 1 cases may take longer than the timescale given above

**7.4 Stage two: Review by an independent appeal panel**

- A parent or carer has 20 working days from receipt of the written stage one response from the Admissions & Transport Service Manager to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the request an independent appeal panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent or carer and officers involved in the case and give a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days), setting out:
  - the nature of the decision reached.
  - how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g., Road Safety GB).
  - information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process.
  - what factors were considered.
  - the rationale for the decision reached.
  - information about the parent's right to put the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (see below).
- Stage 2 appeals will be heard by a panel of three.
- The Clerk to the Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee will be from the Law & Governance Department and will not work for the Admissions Team or the Supported Transport Service.
- A representative of the Admissions Team will present the LA's reasons for not providing transport and appellants can present a case in writing and/or in person (if the parent wishes, accompanied by a friend). The format of the appeal is set out below:
  - presentation of the LA's case by the LA representative.
  - committee members and the parent are able to ask questions of the LA representative.
  - presentation of the parent's case.
  - committee members and the LA representative are able to ask questions of the appellant (if present).
  - summing up by the LA representative.
  - summing up of the appellant's case.
  - both the LA representative and the appellant(s) leave the hearing together.
  - consideration of the case by the Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee in private when the independent panel members will decide whether to uphold or refuse the appeal.
- The decision of the Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee will be considered binding on the LA and appellant and there is no further right of appeal.
- The LA will not consider requests for a further transport appeal within the same school academic year unless there has been a significant change of circumstance.

- Complex Stage 2 cases may take longer than the timescale given above.

## **8. Useful contact information**

### **8.1 Oxfordshire County Council**

School Admissions Team (Transport Eligibility)  
County Hall  
New Road  
Oxford  
OX1 1ND  
Tel: 0345 241 2487  
Email: [schooltransporteligibility@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransporteligibility@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
Web: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

Supported Transport Services  
PO Box 867  
Oxford  
OX1 9NR  
Tel: 01865 323500  
Email: [mainstream.schooltransport@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mainstream.schooltransport@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
Web: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

### **8.2 Planning Transport to School/College**

The public transport pages on the Oxfordshire County Council website give details of bus routes by parish as well as links to operators' websites and timetables:  
[www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/public-transport](http://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/public-transport)

### **8.3 Other useful sources of information on public transport include:**

Traveline: <https://www.traveline.info/>  
Oxford Bus Company: <https://www.oxfordbus.co.uk/>  
Stagecoach Oxfordshire: <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/about/oxfordshire>  
Thames Travel: <https://www.thames-travel.co.uk/>

## **9. Complaints**

Any complaints arising from the processes and procedures set out above should be submitted via the Council's general complaints procedure, details of which are found at: [Complaints and comments about Oxfordshire County Council | Oxfordshire County Council](#)