

West Northamptonshire Council  
Post 16 Education Transport  
September 2024 - July 2025

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## Introduction

This policy statement sets out the support West Northamptonshire Council considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of students of sixth form age and young adult learners, receiving education or training.

The overarching principle of the Policy Statement is to support and help facilitate attendance to accredited programs of learning including those which are funded by the Council and which lead to positive outcomes.

## Legal and policy framework

The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010. These Acts require that:

- (1) A local authority shall prepare for each academic year a transport policy statement.
- (2) The statement shall specify the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the authority consider it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age, receiving education or training at:
  - (a) A school
  - (b) A college of further education
  - (c) An authority maintained or assisted institution providing further education
  - (d) An establishment supported by the Education Funding Agency
  - (e) A learning provider funded by the authority to deliver accredited programs of learning which lead to a positive outcome.
- (3) This requires the authority to have regard to the need to include sufficient information in their transport statement and the need to publish the statement in good time, so that young people and their parents are able to take account of these matters when choosing an establishment.
- (4) The Statement shall specify the arrangements that the authority consider it necessary to make for the provision of financial assistance in respect of the reasonable travelling expenses of persons of sixth form age, receiving education or training at any establishment such as is mentioned in subsection (2).
- (5) The Statement shall also provide information about the travel provision put in place for young adult learners aged 19 – 25 in respect of whom the authority

have carried out a learning difficulty assessment (LDA) or have issued an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

The Department for Education Statutory Guidance 'Post-16 Transport and Travel Support to Education and Training (January 2019)' advises that local authorities should not differentiate between providers or institutions in the arrangements it provides to support students in facilitating their attendance in education or training. In preparing this Policy Statement, West Northamptonshire Council ('The Authority') is mindful of the new requirements under the Education and Skills Act 2008, which are as follows:

### **Raising the Participation Age**

From 2015 all young people are required to continue in learning or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18.

Raising the participation age (RPA) does not mean that young people must stay in school; they will be able to have one of the following choices:

- Full-time education, such as school, FE college or home education
- Apprenticeships, work-based learning
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for at least 20 hours a week

### **Sustainable Transport**

Section 508A of the Education Act places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. The duty applies to young people of sixth form age who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area.

The Council is keen to ensure that as many young people as possible can plan their travel arrangements so they can access their school, college or training provider by using sustainable ways of travel.

To promote sustainable travel, the Council has a dedicated website providing advice and support to help families and young people plan their travel to places of learning. This website can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.smartmovenorthamptonshire.net/journey-planners>

The Council's Active Travel Strategy is being developed and will outline our approach and future plans to increase sustainable travel for all, including scholars and young adults attending education or training. The Strategy is expected to be available late 2024.

The Council will also work with schools, colleges and other training establishments to support them in running their own home to school/college transport arrangements, and to develop programs which support the Council's strategy to increase independent travel.

## Scope

Whilst there is no legal duty to provide free transport to all post-16 students, the scheme operating under this policy acknowledged that the Authority needs to support all young people, including those from low-income families and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The Authority has established a Transport Partnership in which the key stakeholders involved in the provision of education or training for students aged 16 or over, work collaboratively in supporting students and their transport arrangements.

## The Principles of the 2024 – 2025 Policy and Transport Scheme

### **Students of sixth-form age**

This is defined as being a person receiving education or training at an establishment and he/she is over compulsory school (5- 16) age but is under the age of 19 or has begun a particular course at the establishment before attaining the age of 19 and continues to attend that course.

The principles in which the policy is founded remain broadly the same as in previous years and are set out below and include the requirement for entitled students to make a contribution towards their transport costs.

The arrangements under this policy are that all students who are entitled to support, contribute £1,000 per academic year towards the costs of their transport. Where a student qualifies under grounds of low income then the contribution will be reduced by 50% (£500). This charging structure will apply to all students whether attending NCC mainstream or special/specialist post-16 education provision, independent schools or FE colleges and other suitable training establishments.

Where a student qualifies on grounds of low income and who also has an EHCP which necessitates transport assistance, then transport will be provided free of charge to their nearest suitable setting. Where the student is attending a setting which is deemed parental preference, the parent or carer will be required to pay the £1,000 contribution in full.

The policy also includes greater emphasis on the provision of Personal Travel Budgets (PTB's) where this represents a suitable alternative to Council provided transport. Further information on PTB's can be found in the section titled "Types of Support"

In cases where there are 2 or more siblings within a household who are both in Post-16 education and who are entitled to support under this policy, then consideration will be given for a discount for the 2<sup>nd</sup> sibling and each subsequent additional sibling. In some cases, the additional sibling(s) could receive free transport however each case will be considered on its own merits.

The Authority will, in the first instance, consider the use of a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) whereby the parent or carer will be reimbursed for the cost associated with arranging their own transport or for transporting the student themselves. The value of the PTB will reflect the actual cost less the parental contribution and more information is available from page 10 of this policy.

The Authority will also take into account receipt of 16 – 19 bursary funding in assessing an individual's need for financial help with transport. Where a person receives a benefit to facilitate their mobility needs (e.g. Disability Living Allowance, where this includes the higher rate mobility element) the Authority may explore whether this can be used to support their transport needs to and from education or training for which a mileage rate will be paid. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

Please note that where the student becomes 19 years of age during their course, transport assistance will cease at the end of the academic year in which the 19<sup>th</sup> birthday falls.

Students of sixth form age must be enrolled on a full-time education course, scheduled to provide at least 540 hours of guided learning annually. Exceptional circumstances will be considered where a student has, for example, had to take a break in learning due to medical needs and is unable to meet the minimum number of study hours.

The Authority does not provide support for transport assistance for part-time courses; higher education; or non-state funded education, unless agreed and arranged by the Authority.

Where a school/college or parent have been making their own transport arrangements, the Authority will not agree to pay these costs retrospectively.

### Young adult learners, aged 19 – 25 subject to an Education, Health and Care plan

Please note that this policy does not relate to young adults who are not in education or training and who do not have an Education, Health and Care plan. Information about transport provision for other young adults can be obtained from the Authority's Adult Social Care Transport policy.

Whilst the Authority would continue to encourage the participation in education and training by persons who are over compulsory school age but under 19 and persons aged 19 – 25 with an EHC plan, young adult learners would be expected to meet the cost of travel between home and the provider at which they are receiving education or training except in the circumstances as follows:

1. Free transport will be provided to a young adult learner aged 19 – 25 with an EHC plan, where the Authority has secured the provision of education or training and the provision of boarding accommodation. Free transport will only be provided where it is considered necessary to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

2. Free transport assistance may be provided where an adult learner is receiving education or training at an establishment maintained or assisted by the Authority and providing Further Education, or at a College of Further Education, and the Authority considered that:
  - (a) the person's attendance on that course is reasonably necessary; and
  - (b) it was necessary for the Authority to provide transport to facilitate that person's attendance on the course.

In deciding whether it is necessary for the Authority to provide free transport assistance for an adult learner, the Authority will amongst other things, have regard to:

- the learner's age, ability and aptitude
- any learning difficulties the person may have
- the locations and times at which the education or training is provided
- the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which the learner could reasonably be expected to take.

For the purposes of deciding whether to provide free transport the Authority would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector. Each case will be considered on its own merit.

## Apprenticeships

Young adults of sixth form age (16-19) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are undertaking a formal apprenticeship can apply for travel assistance to their nearest suitable educational setting where this is named in Part I to the young persons EHCP. Eligibility for travel assistance will be subject to the same criteria as that for other students attending school or college set out in this policy. No provision of travel assistance will be provided to a young adult to and from their paid work placement.

## Eligibility criteria for support

Students may be entitled to receive appropriate support providing the distance between their home address and nearest suitable place of study is more than 3 miles. The distance between a student's home and place of study will be measured by the shortest available walking route (see the Council's Walking Route Criteria published on the Council's website <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/school-travel-assistance/safer-routes-school>)

Students who live within 3 miles of their nearest or designated school, college or nearest training provider will not normally receive support with transport unless there are exceptional circumstances which mean the student is unable to travel independently or with assistance from a parent, guardian or carer. Consideration will be given by the Authority to the nature of a student's learning difficulty and/or

disability on a case by case basis. Wherever possible, independent travel will be promoted for all students including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Support for transport will normally only be provided to the student's nearest or designated school, suitable college or training provider. Consideration may be given to an alternative setting where a student or their parent, guardian or carer expresses a wish for an alternative school, FE college or training provider on the grounds of religion or belief, where this is the closest provision.

The transport that will be available for eligible students is one return journey home to their main place of study at the normal start and finish times of the school day, and during term time only. These standard times will be reviewed annually and where a particular course timetable does not correspond with the drop off and pick up times of transport, parents or carers will be expected to make arrangements to drop off or collect their child. Alternatively parents or carers should make arrangements with the education or training provider to ensure their child is adequately supervised if required.

Students using transport services funded as part of this scheme may be expected to make their way to the nearest pick up point up to 1 mile away from the home address or destination unless the route is not deemed suitable or cannot reasonably be undertaken due to a student's learning difficulty and/or disability. The definition of a suitable route will be the same as that used in determining suitable routes of children of statutory school age. More information regarding suitable walking routes can be found on the following link:

<https://cms.westnorthants.gov.uk/media/7907/download>All students eligible for support under this scheme and who live over 3 miles from their place of study can apply for a grant for the provision of a bicycle (including a small maintenance allowance) for the primary purpose of travelling to and from their place of study. Students who successfully apply and receive this grant will be deemed to have been provided with satisfactory support for transport for the entire duration of their course. Cycle training will be provided, where requested.

The Authority will administer the scheme in conjunction with schools, FE colleges and training providers and will ensure that the scheme does not differentiate between institutions and providers.

A scheme offering independent travel training to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is being developed working in conjunction with parents, students, schools, FE colleges and training providers.

Parents, guardians or carers of eligible students will be encouraged to provide transport for which a mileage allowance will be payable. Where a person receives a benefit to facilitate their mobility needs (e.g. Disability Living Allowance, where this includes the higher rate mobility element), there is an expectation that this benefit is used by the family to assist the students attendance at school or college.



The partners of this policy recognise that it is the parents' and/or students' responsibility for ensuring attendance at a school, FE college or training provider.

If a student plans to attend/is attending one of the FE colleges in West Northamptonshire, the student must make a transport application directly to the FE College.

An exception is made for those students with an EHCP who are attending Tresham College and all students attending FE Colleges which are outside of Northamptonshire's administrative boundary. These students must apply to Transport Services by using the [application form](#) on the West Northamptonshire Council website.

It is acknowledged that the FE colleges already invest significant resources in providing post-16 transport support alongside the Authority's contribution.

### How the charging scheme works for students of sixth form age

Reductions in the charging scheme for students who are eligible for transport support are determined as follows:

#### **Low income**

Student must:

- i. reside within West Northamptonshire;
- ii. reside more than 3 miles from their nearest suitable educational establishment or training provider; and
- iii. have parents/legal guardian (or who are themselves) in receipt of one of the following benefits:
  - Income Support
  - Income based Job Seekers Allowance
  - Income related Employment and Support Allowance
  - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
  - Child Tax Credit, with no element of Working Tax Credit, and a household income below £16,385pa (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs)
  - Maximum level Working Tax Credit
  - Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
  - Universal Credit (provided families have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as confirmed by earnings from up to the three most recent assessment periods).

Low Income Criteria for Home to School Transport will be reviewed annually and adjusted in accordance with any changes to the criteria issued by Government.

#### **Students with Learning difficulties and/or disabilities**

Student must:

- i. reside within West Northamptonshire;
- ii. have an Education, Health and Care plan, or other professional advice concerning the students' additional needs.
- iii. reside more than 3 miles from their nearest suitable educational establishment or training provider or for students living under this distance, the need for transport support will be assessed according to the students' learning needs and/or disabilities.
- iv. be attending their nearest suitable school, FE college or training provider.

### Type of support/mode of travel offered for students

The scheme operating in accordance with this policy is specifically for students who meet the Authority's eligibility criteria. This does not however restrict individual schemes, which enhance and complement the scope of this policy statement, being introduced by individual schools, colleges or training establishments.

The type of support/mode of travel will depend on the individual circumstances of the student, which will be assessed by the Authority, school, FE college or training provider. Where it is feasible and provides suitable transport arrangements to meet the student's needs, the Authority will in the first instance offer a Personal Travel Budget.

A Personal Travel Budget will be the Council's default offering for students where sole transport is the only available transport solution, unless in exceptional circumstances where it is not possible for parents or carers to provide transport themselves or source suitable arrangements. In these instances transport will be provided by the Council.

The Authority will undertake regular reviews of the decisions made by FE colleges to award transport to students who are eligible under this policy to ensure the financial support to ensure compliance with the policy and that decisions are consistent across all education and training establishments.

#### Personal Travel Budgets (PTB)

Where the young adult qualifies for travel assistance under this policy, they may be entitled to a PTB. Having a PTB provides a parent or carer the freedom to make decisions and arrangements about how their young person will get to and from school, college or other training provision each day.

The PTB can be used for the following:

- Pay towards the running costs of your own vehicle
- Arrange your own locally sourced transport
- Pay friends/family to take your young person to school
- Pay for childcare for a younger sibling allowing you to take your other young person to school

- Purchase bikes for you and your young person and support climate change initiatives
- pay for someone to walk your other children to school
- Buy a travel pass for you and your young person to use public transport
- Buy a travel pass for your other child so they can get to school while you transport your young person with SEND.

The benefits for parents and carers in having a PTB rather than transport arranged by the Council or College are summarised below:

- Fixed regular payments - you always know what you will receive
- Freedom and flexibility to choose the most appropriate travel assistance, to fit with your own personal circumstances
- Greater control over the services or resources you would like to support your young person's needs
- Total flexibility on where and when your young person is picked up e.g. if you want your young person to attend an after-school/college club or go to a grandparent's/carer's after college
- Opportunity to use the PTB to develop your young person's independence around travel and develop independence skills using public transport (where appropriate)

If a young person meets the criteria for a PTB then the Authority will consider if a PTB provides the most efficient use of resources, and where this is the case can be arranged at short notice.

Where a PTB is not cost effective or is unsuitable to meet the needs of the young person, then travel assistance will be offered via an alternative means.

Where a PTB is in place, this will be reviewed annually in consultation with the parent. If changes are required or the PTB is no longer the most efficient use of resource, the Authority will endeavour to provide as much notice as possible of any changes to the travel assistance offered.

The value of the PTB will be based on the actual costs incurred in transporting the young learner to and from their place of study, less the parental contribution required under this policy.

The Authority reserves the right to withdraw the provision of a PTB at any time and parents and carers will retain the right to formally appeal any decision by the Authority to change or alter the provision of travel assistance offered.

The Authority is currently working with Northamptonshire FE colleges to allow all FE college students to use Council contracted school services, where the service could broadly meet the journey requirements of the student.

## Public Bus and Rail Services

Where a student is entitled to support and their journey can reasonably be accommodated using existing public bus or rail, then the student will be expected

to pay up to the first £1,000 in accordance with the outcome of their low income assessment, learning difficulties and/or disabilities entitlement.

The cost of the pass will also vary due to the number of different public transport providers operating throughout West Northamptonshire and the individual journey requirement of the student. The Authority is working to secure fair and consistent pricing for student bus passes.

Further Education colleges themselves operate subsidised transport schemes and students are advised to contact the FE colleges directly to identify what additional support may be available.

## Other Transport Provision

Where public transport is not available, or the student is unable to use public transport due to a learning difficulty or disability, then it may be necessary to provide a taxi to accommodate a student's journey to and from school or college. In such cases the student will be expected to pay up to the first £1,000 in accordance with the outcome of their low income assessment, learning difficulties and/or disabilities entitlement.

Where a school or FE college arranges the transport for students, they will be expected to use the Authority's Framework Agreements in the procurement of transport and ensure that where appropriate, the provision of a taxi is shared with other entitled students.

Parents or carers of students who are entitled for support under this policy will be encouraged to provide transport for which a mileage allowance will be paid. Where a student is in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance then this may be used to transport the student to and from school or FE College.

## Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Students with an EHC plan, will be assessed on their transport entitlement by the Authority or by the FE College. Other students who do not have an EHC plan but may have SEN will be considered by the school, FE college or training provider in agreement with the Authority. Decisions/recommendations will be made in accordance with the legal framework and statutory guidance for post-16 transport provision. Suitable travel arrangements will then be provided to address the needs of entitled students.

Some FE colleges already operate an independent travel training programme for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Whilst each programme will differ slightly, the Authority would wish to develop a comprehensive programme across Northamptonshire working in partnership with education establishments to introduce training during the final 2 years of a student's statutory education prior to commencing their further education.

## Out of West Northamptonshire Area Education Provision

This policy applies where the educational needs of a student with learning difficulties and/or disabilities cannot be addressed within West Northamptonshire and a suitable out of area establishment is identified by the Authority.

Students attending an alternative school through personal preference or choice will not receive assistance with transport.

Attendance at out of West Northamptonshire education establishments may include weekly or termly boarding and hence the transport arrangements for each student will vary accordingly. In such cases, the scheduling of transport will be agreed with the school, FE college or training provider, in conjunction with the parents/carers or young person and within the terms of the EHCP.

### Applying for post-16 travel support

To apply for transport to a school, or Tresham College, the [application forms](#) are now available on the West Northamptonshire Council website. If you are applying for transport to Northampton College or Moulton College, you will need to apply to the college direct. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) and student to obtain an application form and apply for transport support.

To be guaranteed transport, subject to the qualifying criteria, on WNC vehicles the closing date for post 16 applications is on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> **May prior to the September of that academic year**

Any applications received after this deadline are considered late and may not be processed until the October half term and will be provided subject to available capacity. Please ensure that you have alternative transport arrangements in place during this time. West Northamptonshire Council will not be responsible for any travel costs incurred during this time.

Completed applications received before by the deadline will guarantee transport support for the whole of the next academic year, subject to eligibility.

Completed applications received after the last working day in May will not guarantee transport support for the whole of the next academic year.

FE Colleges or training providers may have their own arrangements and contact should be made with them initially to discuss this.

### Appeal procedures

Parents/guardians/carers or a young person are entitled to challenge the decision of the Authority to refuse to provide assistance with transport as set out in this policy or when the parents/guardians/carers or young person consider that the travel arrangements, agreed by the Authority, are unsuitable.

A decision may be challenged on the following grounds:

- eligibility
- distance measurement; and/or
- safety of the route
- transport arrangements offered

Please note that there is no right to challenge a decision made by the Authority, where a child's/young person's entitlement to transport assistance has been removed either temporarily or permanently on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour. What is unacceptable behaviour. List examples, but not limited to and state it will be assessment on case by case basis.

Full details can be found on the Council's website on the [appeals procedure](#) for home to school transport.

## Work of the Transport Partnership

West Northamptonshire's Post-16 Transport Partnership brings together key partners in Northamptonshire who work collaboratively on the Post 16 Transport Policy statement and to develop innovative and appropriate travel solutions to enable access to further education and training courses for this age group.

We intend to deliver an Independent Travel Education Programme aimed at improving travel independence for Post 16 students (often with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) to enable access to college and special school by travelling on public transport independently.

West Northamptonshire Council and Stagecoach Midlands are collaborating to encourage eligible students to make use of the National Concessionary Fare Scheme which is a free public bus pass for students with a disability. The bus pass and supporting morning only Termrider pass will enable suitable college students to travel independently to college and socially. Please contact the Transport Services Team for more details

Email: [sentransport.ncc@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:sentransport.ncc@westnorthants.gov.uk)

## College Information

Below is a brief summary from each of the Northamptonshire Colleges:

### **Northampton College**

Northampton College offer subsidised bus passes where a student is eligible as per the NCC criteria (under 19, more than 3 miles from site of study, on a full-time course) Students can apply to the bursary for transport support where there is a household income below £26,000 or income based benefits

Northampton College sell stagecoach bus passes for use on public bus services. Bus number 16 travels every 10 minutes between Northampton bus station and Northampton College.

Contact phone number for all 3 sites: 01604 734258

Email: [student.services@northamptoncollege.ac.uk](mailto:student.services@northamptoncollege.ac.uk)

### **Moulton College**

Moulton College operates a comprehensive subsidised transport network throughout Northamptonshire, allowing students access to the main college and all of its outcentres.

Moulton College: 01604 491131

Information can be found on Moulton College website for their [transport and travel costs](#)

### **Tresham College**

Mainstream students should apply directly to the college when making their college application.

Students with an EHCP should apply for Post 16 Transport arrangements using the [application form](#) on the West Northamptonshire Council's website.

Tresham College may offer additional support to learners through their Learner Support Fund subject to meeting the eligibility criteria

Tresham College: 0845 6588990 – select campus required

Email: [info@tresham.ac.uk](mailto:info@tresham.ac.uk)

### **Public Transport Information**

National TravelLine: 0870 608 2608

Information can be found on TravelLine Website for their [timetables or bus routes](#).

Stagecoach East: 01604 676060/ 0870 608 2608

Information can be found on Stagecoach East website for their [timetables or bus routes](#).