



## **Post 16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2023-24**

**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**

## **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 the transport provision and financial assistance with transport that the council believes are 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 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 19 up until they reach the age of 25 years.
- 1.4 If Post 16 travel assistance is agreed, young people will normally be expected to use public transport (ordinary scheduled bus or train services) or, if this is unavailable, contracted transport such as a coach or minibus.
- 1.5 Taxis will only be used where there:
  - is no public transport; or,
  - it would be too onerous to use public transport due to multiple changes of bus; or,
  - it can be demonstrated that 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.
- 1.6 Wherever possible the Local Authority 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.
- 1.7 Agreement to an actual requirement for the young person to travel alone requires an assessment by the Supported Transport Team or follows a successful Stage 1 or Stage 2 appeal. Assessments will be made by specialist officers within the Supported Transport Team.
- 1.8 Specialist tail-lift vehicles will only be agreed after an assessment by the Supported Transport Service or following a successful Stage 1 or Stage 2 appeal.
- 1.9 If travel assistance is provided, it will normally be at the beginning and end of the school/college day.

## **2. Provision**

- 2.1 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.

- 2.2 For most young people any travel costs incurred will be their responsibility, or that of their parent or parents.
- 2.3 However, where it is not possible to access Post 16 education, for example the nearest school or college is over 3 miles from the student's home and there is no public transport service, the council may be able to assist with travel. In these circumstances, the student or parents should contact School Transport Eligibility at: [SchoolTransportEligibility@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolTransportEligibility@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- 2.4 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).
- 2.5 The nearest suitable educational placement is one at which the need can be met. For those with EHCPs, this will be established by the School Transport Eligibility Team from the responses to the formal consultations with schools and colleges undertaken by the SEN Team. 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.
- 2.6 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 the young person's 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.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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 the student's needs, for example, if free travel assistance has been agreed and the student is in a residential placement, travel arrangements would be made on a weekly or termly basis.
- 2.8 An officer within the School Transport Eligibility Team is responsible for the assessment of eligibility for free travel assistance.
- 2.9 Independent travel training for students 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. Oxfordshire County Council Spare Seat Scheme for those aged 16-19

- 3.1 If a young person does not qualify for free travel assistance, it may be possible to purchase a seat on home to school transport through the Spare Seat Scheme.
- 3.2 It may be the case that there is already transport arranged by Oxfordshire County Council from where a student lives for young people who are eligible for free travel to their school or college, and if there is space in the vehicle it may be possible to purchase a seat.
- 3.3 This is a paid service that is only available on existing transport and where there would be no additional cost for Oxfordshire County Council to add the young person to the journey
- 3.4 If a student would like to be considered for any place available under the Spare Seat Scheme, they need to submit an application using the following link:  
[Paid home to school travel assistance \(spare seats scheme\) | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- 3.5 There is no guarantee that a seat will be available or will continue to be available for the duration of the period of study for a young person. It is important that students consider how they may travel to school or college if this service is not available.
- 3.6 Seats on coaches provided for home-to-school transport are made available on payment of a distance related charge. The charges for the 2023/24 academic year are set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Post-16 Charges**

<b>Spare Seats Scheme Charge</b>	<b>2023/24</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

- 3.7 The charge will depend on the distance from a student's home to their school or college. The distance from home to school or college will be measured along the shortest available route on Oxfordshire County Council's Geographic Information System.
- 3.8 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)*

#### **4. 16 to 19 Bursary Fund**

- 4.1 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 students in Post 16 Education and can be used toward the cost of travelling to and from school or college.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 Further information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found on Gov.UK web pages at the following link [16 to 19 Bursary Fund: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-overview)
- 4.4 16-19 Bursary funds are managed by schools and colleges. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen institution to make an application.
- 4.5 Students aged under 19 enrolled on courses for higher education qualifications are not eligible for support.

#### **5. Support for students aged 19-25 (Adult Duty)**

- 5.1 Applications for travel assistance for students 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 the student's 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. Young parents / Care to Learn

6.1 If a student is a young parent 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 More detailed information on this and how to apply can be found here:

[Care to Learn: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

## 7. Transport Appeals for those aged 16 to 18 and those continuing learners who started their course before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday (those covered by the sixth form transport duty)

7.1 If a parent disagrees with the decision not to award free travel assistance it is possible to appeal. Oxfordshire County 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 parents and carers 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 about Oxfordshire County Council | Oxfordshire County Council](#)