



**Cumberland  
Council**



# **Post-16 Travel Assistance Policy**

## **2026-2027**

**Find out more at [cumberland.gov.uk](https://www.cumberland.gov.uk)**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document is the Council's Post-16 Travel Assistance Statement. The Council is required to publish a policy every year setting out what travel support is available to help young people who are aged 16-18 (as well as older students who started their course of study before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday) attend their school or further education institution. Information is also provided about arrangements for those aged 19-25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- 1.2 The policy statement supersedes all previous transport arrangements and entitlements. The Travel Assistance Policy will be reviewed annually. This version covers the academic year from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027.
- 1.3 The Education Act 1996 gives the Council the discretion to determine what travel support will be made available. This is different to the arrangements that apply to pupils in Reception to Year 11 (i.e. those of statutory school age), where the law provides set criteria for eligibility. In common with many councils, Cumberland takes the view that the majority of post-16 students can and should be able to make their way to their place of study by their own means or with support from parents and carers, either by using public transport, accessing a spare seat on a Council-contracted vehicle taking pupils to school, driving, walking or cycling. The Council also recognises, however, that, for some students, it is simply not possible for them to make arrangements to get to school or college, and we will endeavour to provide support in such cases.
- 1.4 To be eligible for assistance, a young person must be a resident of Cumberland. Young people not resident in Cumberland, or who are cared for by another Council but live in Cumberland, should refer to the Travel Assistance Policy of their own Council.
- 1.5 In addition, the chosen study programme must take place at a publicly funded provider (i.e. by the Council or the Education Skills Funding Agency), the study programme must be full time (equivalent to a minimum of 16 hours per week) and the young person must attend the nearest provider that can meet their needs.
- 1.6 Parents or carers will need to demonstrate that they have explored and exhausted all available options before the Council will provide travel support. If public transport is available, the Council will expect post-16 pupils to use it, even where this does not deliver a door-to-door service. If the place of study is within reasonable distance of home, the Council will expect students to walk or cycle.

## **2. Travel Assistance for students aged 16-18**

- 2.1 Young people are required to stay in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. There is no statutory requirement for young people to stay in school, but they must choose one of the following options:
  - Full-time education
  - An apprenticeship
  - Part-time education or training if they are employed, self employed or volunteering full time (which is defined as 20 hours or more a week)
- 2.2 Most students do not receive or require travel support from the Council to enable them to participate in education and training. Generally, transport will only be provided for:
  - Qualifying Post-16 students from low-income families

- Qualifying Post-16 students who have SEND

2.3 The Council will have regard to the following in considering whether to provide travel support:

- The needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to attend a particular establishment to receive education or training if no travel arrangements were made by the Council;
- The needs of students who are parents;
- The need to ensure that students have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education or training is provided;
- The Council's legal duties, including the duty to ensure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of 16-18 year-olds;
- Distance and journey time from the student's home to establishments of education and training, the cost of transport there and alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments;
- The nature of the route or alternative routes which the student could reasonably be expected to take;
- Any preference to attend a particular educational establishment based on religion or belief for students from families on low income;
- The nature of the student's special educational needs, disability or learning difficulty;
- Anything stated in an EHC plan about transport;
- Whether there is a nearer institution which is suitable and can provide the same or similar qualification(s);
- The best use of the Council's resources.
- Where the Council agrees to provide support, this will be by the most efficient mode of transport available that meets the pupil's needs.

2.4 A range of specific fare arrangements are available through transport providers, such as travel cards and special fare offers. Some students will qualify for the 16–19 Bursary Fund (see Section 4). The discretionary bursary is targeted at students facing financial hardship, including transport costs. For further information, please contact individual providers who are listed in Section 12.

2.5 Students in receipt of a 16-19 Bursary will be expected to use the award towards their transport costs. Where known, the value of any bursary or grant awarded to the student must be identified on the application for travel assistance or evidence made available that an application has been made.

2.6 Support will only be provided to the nearest available school or college where a suitable study programme is available. The Council will not provide travel assistance to students who choose not to attend the nearest provision offering a suitable programme. Transport will not be provided on the basis of a single subject being unavailable at the nearest learning provider.

2.7 Any travel assistance agreed by the Council will be provided on a term-by-term basis. The continuation of assistance is subject to satisfactory attendance for the previous term as confirmed by the education provider.

2.8 The Council encourages students aged 16+ to travel independently on public transport, where this is available to enable them to develop the skills for a successful transition into adulthood. The Council is operating an Independent Travel Training Scheme for students, which may support them to use public transport where it is available. However, the Council recognises that the use of public transport is not always possible for students with severe and complex learning difficulties and disability, and additional assistance with travel will be required.

2.9 Travel assistance is granted for one academic year of study so **parents and carers must**

**apply annually for travel assistance support.** Families in receipt of travel support in Year 11 will not automatically receive support in Year 12 or beyond. **All Post-16 students will need to apply for travel assistance via the Cumberland Council Citizen's Portal: [https://ems.cumberland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal\\_LIVE](https://ems.cumberland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE)**

- 2.10 The transport needs of students with special educational needs and disabilities will be reassessed when a student moves from compulsory schooling to Post-16 education, even if the student is remaining at the same educational setting.
- 2.11 If a student has an EHC Plan with an institution named in their plan, there is no automatic entitlement to transport to and from the named provider. Transport support will be considered in accordance with this Post-16 Travel Assistance Policy.
- 2.12 Any Support provided will be by the most economically efficient means possible. The Council expects that the majority of students will be able to share transport with others and, where appropriate, will provide a single vehicle for multiple students.

### **3. The 16 to 19 Bursary Scheme**

- 3.1 The 16 to 19 Bursary Scheme provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. Those who are 16-19 and who are in the following groups receive a bursary of up to £1,200 a year:
- Students in care and care leavers
  - Students claiming Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name
  - Students in receipt of Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit, and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own name;
- 3.2 Discretionary bursaries are also awarded by institutions to help with transport, meals, books and equipment.
- 3.3 To apply for a bursary, students should speak to their school, Academy, college or training provider as they each have their own application process. Contact details are listed in Section 12.

Further information can be found at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) search for post 16 bursaries.

- 3.4 If you are a young parent under 20, 'Care to Learn' can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning.

For more information please visit: [gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim](https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim)

Spare capacity on vehicles contracted by the Council for pupils with a statutory entitlement will be offered to Post-16 education providers at a cost of **£763.40 per seat**.

To qualify for Post-16 transport on low-income grounds, parents/carers must provide evidence (dated within 3 months of the commencement of their course) that they are in receipt of one of the following:

- Income Support.
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IB JSA).
- Child Tax Credit and have an annual income below the relevant threshold.
- Employment and Support Allowance (income related).
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Maximum level of Working Tax Credit.
- Benefits that supersede those listed above.

## **4. Travel Assistance for students aged 19+ with SEND**

- 4.1 The requirement for the Council to consider whether travel arrangements are necessary to enable participation in education and training continues after the age of 18 years in respect of students up to the age of 25 with EHC Plans who started their programme of learning before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Where the Council considers it necessary to make arrangements for the provision of transport where the Council itself has secured the provision of the education or training at the relevant institution, along with the provision of boarding accommodation, then this transport will be provided free of charge.

Applications will initially be assessed on the basis of the evidence provided. The Council may undertake further assessment to determine whether it is necessary for the Council to make travel arrangements.

## **5. Travel Training**

- 5.1 Some students may be offered Independent Travel Training. This will be funded by the Council where it is likely to lead to a student being removed from a high-cost route onto public transport. For students deemed eligible, the Council will cover the costs of training and also the cost of a pass for the student to travel on public transport once training is completed.

## **6. Personal Travel Budgets**

- 6.1 Some families may be offered a personal travel budget to support the cost of transport to school or college. Parents cannot be compelled to accept a PTB. PTBs will be paid at a minimum of £0.55/mile, with a discretionary additional element of daily funding.

## **7. Situations where travel assistance will not be provided**

- 7.1 Travel assistance will not be provided in the following circumstances. It will be for parents/carers to provide transport on these occasions:

- If the student does not fulfil the criteria
- If the parent/carer requests a place that is not the nearest appropriate establishment at which a place is available
- For students with an EHCP, where the parents have agreed to make provision for transport
- To work experience placements or other extra-curricular activities
- To dental or hospital appointments
- To clinical, medical, or non-educational appointments
- In the event of detention and/or exclusions
- To attend meetings following exclusion
- To attend open days and 'taster sessions' at a setting
- Following continued inappropriate behaviour occurring on transport
- In the event that a student is unwell, having already arrived at the post 16 provider, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

## **8. Removal of Support**

- 8.1 The Council will remove travel assistance with immediate effect where it is proven that assistance was obtained on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, or where a young person's circumstances have changed, which results in the student no longer being

eligible for support or has been assessed as not requiring support. Any fraudulent claims may result in criminal prosecution.

- 8.2 The Council encourages positive behaviour on transport so that the health and safety of all passengers and staff is maintained. If there is an incident causing concern whilst on transport, this will be discussed with parents, carers and where appropriate, with the necessary professionals. Transport may be suspended if an investigation is undertaken and it will be the parents responsibility to ensure they attend in the interim. Ongoing serious behavioural issues may result in transport being permanently removed.

## **9. How to apply for Post 16 travel assistance**

- 9.1 The Council will expect conversations to have taken place between the student, their parents/carers and the post 16 provider they intend to study with, to check out their travel support alongside any bursaries before an application to the Council is made. The application process for post 16 travel can be found online at the following address [https://ems.cumberland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal\\_LIVE](https://ems.cumberland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE) or by phoning the School Transport team on **0300 3031591 (option 1)**
- 9.2 Applications for travel assistance can be made throughout the academic year. In order to arrange necessary travel assistance for young people starting placements in September, applications should be received **by the end of the summer school term**. This is to provide the passenger transport team with sufficient time to arrange travel assistance where required. Where applications are received after this date, travel assistance arrangements may not be in place for the start of the academic year and students will need to organise interim arrangements. Until an application is approved, the Council is not responsible for any travel costs incurred by students.
- 9.3 Applicants will be required to explain and evidence in the application how they meet the criteria and why transport assistance is required. All information must be complete to ensure it can be fully considered against the criteria in this policy. Missing information or insufficient evidence may result in the application being returned and a delay in the decision.
- 9.4 Should disagreements arise about the travel assistance offer then the Council will endeavour to informally resolve the issue. Further evidence may be requested.

## **10. Appeals**

- 10.1 The Council's Travel Assistance Appeals process for **students aged 16-18** consists of 2 stages:

### **Stage 1: Review by the Senior Manager**

- The appeal will be considered by a senior officer delegated by the Director of Children's Services. They will review the original transport decision in light of the information provided. The appellant will receive their decision in writing within 20 working days of the Council having received the appeal.

### **Stage 2: Review by an Independent Appeal Panel**

- If the appellant does not agree with the Senior Officer's decision at Stage 1, they may escalate the appeal to Stage 2 within 20 working days from receipt of the Stage 1 decision. The grounds on which the Independent Appeal Panel can allow an appeal are as follows:
- That the Council has not applied its SEND Travel Assistance Policy
- That there are compelling grounds to justify making an exception to the terms of the Council's Home to School Transport Assistance Policy

- 10.2 The Panel will be made up of three independent Council officers who were not involved in the original decision or in Stage 1 of the complaint. The hearing will take place within 40 working days of the appellant notifying the Council of the wish to escalate the appeal to Stage 2. Applicants can, if they wish, attend this hearing to explain to the panel why they do not agree with the Council's transport decision. Council officers involved in the case will also attend the hearing to explain the reasons for its transport decision. There will be an opportunity for questions during the hearing. The appellant will receive the appeal panel's decision in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing.
- 10.3 The Procedure for students aged 19+ or their representatives is that they should make a complaint to the Council using the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.
- 10.4 Complaints can be made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman if, following the appeal, the appellant feels that the Council have refused help unfairly, made a mistake or not handled the application for home to school transport correctly. For more information visit: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>
- 10.5 Complaints can also be made to the Secretary of State for Education. Young people or their families should use the contact form on gov.uk - [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus). Any complaint should outline the case, set out the decision taken by the local authority and include any other relevant documentation, for example any advice or decisions from the LGO where appropriate.

## 11. Safeguarding

- 11.1 If any person has any concerns about the safety of a child, please contact Cumbria Safeguarding Hub on 03333 240 1727.

## 12. Other Support available

For information about travel assistance and bursary schemes from individual sixth form providers, please visit their websites:

Caldew School, Dalston – 01228 710044 or email: [office@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk)

Carlisle College, Carlisle email: [info@carlisle.ac.uk](mailto:info@carlisle.ac.uk)

Cockermouth School – email [reception@cockermouthschool.org](mailto:reception@cockermouthschool.org)

Keswick School, Keswick [admin@keswick.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:admin@keswick.cumbria.sch.uk)

Millom School, Millom email: [genenquiries@millom.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:genenquiries@millom.cumbria.sch.uk)

Netherall School, Maryport email: [office@netherhall.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@netherhall.cumbria.sch.uk)

Richard Rose Central Academy, Carlisle email: [info@rrca.org.uk](mailto:info@rrca.org.uk)

St Benedict's Catholic High School, Whitehaven – email [admin@st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-benedicts.cumbria.sch.uk)

St John Henry Newman Catholic School, Carlisle email [office@newman.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@newman.cumbria.sch.uk)

The Nelson Thomlinson School, Wigton email: [admin@nts.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:admin@nts.cumbria.sch.uk)

Trinity School, Carlisle email: [6thform@trinity.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:6thform@trinity.cumbria.sch.uk) or [info@trinity.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:info@trinity.cumbria.sch.uk)

West Coast Sixth Form, Whitehaven and Workington email: [office@westcoastsixthform.org](mailto:office@westcoastsixthform.org)

West Lakes Academy, Egremont email: [wla@changinglives.education](mailto:wla@changinglives.education)

William Howard School, Brampton email [mail@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:mail@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk)

## Transport and travel support

### Concessionary tickets for young people 16-25 from public transport providers

- Reays Coaches, Ellenvale and Stagecoach provide scheduled bus services in parts of

Cumberland. Please follow the links below for further information about their fares and timetables:

**[reays.co.uk](http://reays.co.uk)**

**[stagecoachbus.com](http://stagecoachbus.com)**

**[ellenvale.co.uk](http://ellenvale.co.uk)**

- Details of all rail services in Cumberland can be found on the National Rail link below **[nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)**

## Stage 1 Appeal Form – Review by a Senior Manager

Parent/carer name(s):

Parent/carer postal  
address(s):

Parent/carer telephone number(s):

Parent/carer e-mail address(s):

Accessibility or other requirements which we need to be aware of to assist with processing your appeal:

Pupil's/student's name:

Pupil's/student's date of birth:

Pupil's/student's place of education:

Please select the main ground which your appeal is based on from the list below:

The transport arrangements offered.

Pupil's/student's eligibility.

The distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances.

The safety of the route.

Please outline the reasons for your appeal and attach documentation to support your case, where applicable.

When complete post to the following address:

Home to School Transport Stage 1 Appeal, Transport Services, Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle CA1 1RD

## Stage 2 Appeal Form – Review by an Independent Appeal Panel

Parent/carer name(s):

Parent/carer postal

address(s):

Parent/carer telephone number(s):

Parent/carer e-mail address(s):

Accessibility or other requirements which we need to be aware of to assist with processing your appeal:

Pupil's/student's name:

Pupil's/student's date of birth:

Pupil's/student's place of education:

Please select the main ground which your appeal is based on from the list below:

- That the Council has not applied its Home to School Transport Policy.
- That there are compelling grounds to justify making an exception to the terms of the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.

Please outline the reasons for your appeal and attach documentation to support your case, where applicable.

When complete post to the following address:

Home to School Transport Stage 2 Appeal, PA to Assistant Director – Education, SEND and Inclusion, Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle CA1 1RD



