



Post-16 Transport Policy 2027-28

Summary

This document details the arrangements for post 16 transport.

Owner

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Contents

Post-16 Transport Policy 2027-28	1
Summary.....	1
Contents.....	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Responsibilities and duties	3
3. Travel assistance	3
4. General transport availability	4
5. Support for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) aged 16 to 18.....	- 4
6. Support for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) - aged 19 to 25	5
6.1 Circumstances Not Normally Considered for Eligibility.....	6
7. How to Apply	7
8. Medical Grounds	7
9. Application and review process	7
10. How to Appeal a Decision	8
11. How to make a complaint or seek remedy for an issue with transport	10



1. Introduction

Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement by 31 May each year.

This statement specifies the arrangements for transport that Reading Borough Council (RBC) considers is necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 students receiving education or training.

Reading Borough Council's Post-16 Transport Policy Statement provides information on travel and transport arrangements that are available to young people who are above statutory school age, which ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they turn 16.

RBC's ambition is that every student in the borough achieves their full potential. We are committed to ensuring that those aged 16 and over as explained above (including those with Education, Health and Care Plans up to the age of 25) have access to educational opportunities at school, college, or other education settings. Part of this ambition is for as many students as possible to travel independently using a sustainable form of transport.

Research for the Motability Foundation finds that **ability to travel independently directly affects young people's:**

- independence
- social connections
- ability to participate in education, employment and wider society

The Post-16 Transport Policy Statement sets out how we support young people access education as independently and actively as possible, to support young people achieve their goals and ambitions and achieve positive outcomes.

This Statement applies to any young person who is living in the Reading Borough Council area. Students who do not live in the Reading Borough Council area should refer to the Transport Policy and Statement issued by their home Local Authority.

2. Responsibilities and duties

The statement is published in line with the statutory duties under the Education Act 1996, including s.509AA and s.509AB and takes into account the Department for Education statutory guidance – Post-16 transport to education and training, January 2019.

3. Travel assistance

Students are now required to be in education, employment or training until their 18th birthday, which could involve mixing full-time work with study, following an apprenticeship,



continuing full time in school or college, or combining part-time training with volunteering. There has not, however, been any change to statutory school age which ends at the end of the academic year in which the student turns 16.

Reading Borough Council is required to facilitate the attendance of all those of Post 16 age i.e. those students in school years 12 to 14 or who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. This may involve travel assistance, but Reading Borough Council does not have to provide this assistance free of charge.

Responsibility for attendance at an education setting lies with the student and their parents/carers.

4. General transport availability

We encourage all young people to consider public transport as a first principle in accessing post 16 education. Public transport offers the opportunity for young people to develop their social skills, confidence, communications skills and independence.

There are a number of public transport service providers in Reading. Some colleges and schools in Reading and surrounding boroughs have their own transport arrangements but each arrangement can vary.

Young people should check with their setting about the transport arrangements and ticketing prices that can apply to both bus and train travel.

Reading Borough Council has arrangements with some local bus and train operators for the purchase of annual season tickets at preferential rates, including Reading Buses.

Interested parents, carers and young people should contact the relevant transport provider to purchase tickets.

Certain Colleges such as Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) provide buses from Reading to the College at a charge. For further information please contact the respective college.

5. Support for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) - aged 16 to 18

To qualify for travel assistance from Reading Borough Council, the following criteria will be applied. Transport needs will be assessed as part of the Education, Health and Care Plan annual review process.

Transport assistance is based on travel from the home address, as defined in the Home to School Transport Policy, to the educational placement(s) named in Section I of the



Education, Health & Care Plan. A student may be eligible for transport assistance if they meet the following criteria.

- The student is resident in the Reading Borough Council area.
- The student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a named school or educational setting, AND
- The named school or educational setting is the nearest suitable school or educational setting as defined in the Home to School Transport Policy and not a placement chosen on the basis of parental preference, AND
- The programme of learning is full-time (i.e. at least 540 plus guided learning (planned and funded) hours per year, AND
- The student is unable to travel on public transport to the educational setting due to their Special Educational Needs, disability or mobility difficulty, OR
- The student lives more than 3 miles walking distance from the school or educational setting as measured by RBC, OR
- The student is unable to walk the distance because of their mobility difficulty OR
- **Low income:** without the Council's transport assistance, the student would be unable to attend the educational placement due to financial constraints

6. Support for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) - aged 19 to 25

There are additional responsibilities under Section 508F and Section 508G of the Education Act 1996 for Reading Borough Council to provide transport for some students over the age of 19. These students must meet the following criteria:

- The student has commenced their course at the setting before the age of 19
- The student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a named school or educational setting.
- The named school or educational setting must be the nearest suitable provision, as defined in the Home to School Transport Policy, and not a placement chosen on the basis of preference.
- The student is unable to travel on public transport to their educational setting due to their Special Educational Needs, disability or mobility difficulty. Eligibility under this criterion must be evidenced through written professional documentation that clearly explains why the student cannot reasonably be expected to use public transport, even with support. Evidence may include (but is not limited to) medical reports,



educational psychologist or other relevant professional assessment confirming the nature and impact of the need.

- The programme of learning is full-time (i.e. at least 540 plus guided learning (planned and funded) hours per year.
- The student:
 - a. lives more than 3 miles walking distance from the school or educational setting as measured by OR
 - b. they are unable to walk the distance because of their mobility difficulty.

6.1 Circumstances Not Normally Considered for Eligibility

The following circumstances, in isolation, would not normally be considered sufficient to meet this criterion:

- **Parental work or other commitments**

A parent or carer being unavailable to accompany the student due to work, childcare, or other personal commitments.

- **Lack of confidence or limited independent travel experience**

The student has not previously used public transport or lacks confidence, where there is no supporting professional evidence that this is due to their Special Educational Needs or disability.

- **Behaviour that is not linked to SEND or disability**

Behavioural difficulties that are not evidenced as arising from the student's Special Educational Needs or disability.

- **Preference for private or arranged transport**

A preference for council-arranged or private transport over available public transport options.

- **General anxiety without professional evidence**

Reports of anxiety or distress related to travel where this is not supported by relevant professional evidence demonstrating a significant impact on the student's ability to travel.

- **Cost of transport**

The cost of public transport, where suitable transport is available.



Each application will be considered on its individual merits, taking into account all supporting evidence provided.

Students who have been assessed and are eligible for travel assistance will be allocated travel assistance appropriate to their assessed needs. This may be specialised if they require equipment to enable them to be transported.

Travel assistance to the educational setting must be re-applied for every academic year **OR** before the start of any new course, or before the change of a home address.

Where a student with an EHCP **starts a course at aged 19 or older**, as adult learners any transport assistance is at the discretion of Reading Borough Council. Applications will be considered by the relevant Reading Borough Council team with responsibility for adults.

7. How to Apply

To apply for travel assistance please complete and submit the form that can be found via [School transport - Reading Borough Council](#) webpage or via the following link [SEND Transport Assistance Application Form 2026](#) .

For advice on financial support to access higher education please contact Student Finance England on 0300 100 0607.

8. Medical Grounds

If a young person has a temporary or enduring medical condition making it impossible to walk to school, then assistance **may** be provided. Applications for assistance on this basis will need to be supported by appropriate evidence from the medical profession. Evidence required by the council may include, but may not be restricted to, a letter from the young person's General Practitioner or Consultant or both and must be supplied at no cost to the RBC. The evidence must have been provided in the 6 months prior to the date of application.

If a parent feels the young person may be eligible, they need to contact and discuss this with the SEN Team.

Reading Borough Council reserves the right to consult with relevant health professionals for further advice and may choose to seek comment from the educational institution or school attended by the child or young person.



9. Application and review process

Pupils with an EHCP

Applications are made to the SEND Team and assessed by the SEND Panel to make a decision on an annual basis.

Review process

Provision of travel assistance at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement and the requirement will be reviewed by the Local authority on a regular basis.

All students who receive travel assistance will be subject to review:

- At the annual review meeting if the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Following a change in circumstances.

If during the course of any academic year Reading Borough Council determines that the provision of travel assistance is no longer appropriate, it will stop at the end of the term in which the decision was made.

Travel assistance is only awarded for one academic year, for courses longer than one year, a new application has to be made each year.

10. How to Appeal a Decision

If you applied for travel assistance and your child is not offered assistance or the transport being provided is unsuitable, you do have a right to challenge the decision through the appeals process. This guide will take you through the appeals process.

Grounds for Challenge

There are only two grounds for appeal, and these are:

- That you believe the policy has NOT been applied correctly.
- That you believe the policy HAS been properly applied correctly but the exceptional circumstances outlined in the application have not been fully considered.

How to make an appeal.

If you believe that one of the two grounds for appeal apply you can challenge the decision. There are two stages to the appeals process.



Stage One

This appeal will be reviewed by a senior officer in the School Transport Service, the Reviewing Officer.

An appeal should be submitted, via the online form [Appeal against a school transport decision Stage 1](#)

This should be completed and submitted within 20 working days from the receipt of the Authority's written decision not to award assistance. The form will ask you to state which of the two grounds you are appealing on and why you are appealing.

If you are appealing on exceptional circumstances or low income you will be able to upload further evidence not included in your original application. Do not include the evidence submitted with your original application.

The Reviewing Officer will review your original application within 20 working days of receipt and parents/carers/young person will be notified in writing of the outcome.

The outcome will clearly explain:

- whether they have upheld the local authority's original decision;
- why they reached that decision;
- how the review was conducted;
- the factors considered in reaching their decision;
- any other agencies or departments that were consulted as part of the review.

Where The Reviewing Officer upholds the original decision, the parent/carer/young person may escalate their appeal to stage two of the process as outlined below.

Stage Two

If your appeal is not upheld, and the original decision remains you have a second chance to challenge the decision.

This should be completed and submitted within 20 working days from the receipt of the Reviewing Officers written decision not to award assistance (stage 1 outcome). The form will ask you to state which of the two grounds you are appealing on and why you are appealing.

The parent/carer/young person should request that their appeal be progressed to Stage Two where it will be reviewed by an Independent Officer Panel headed by a senior officer from Reading Borough Council. This will be independent of the original decision-making process. The officer will have the knowledge, skills and experience to ensure that the local authority complies with its statutory duties



Parents/carers/young person can submit additional information and will be invited to attend. Officers on this panel will have had no involvement in the original decision making. The appeal date will be within 40 working days of receipt of your request and any additional supporting information. Prior to the case being heard, a full copy of all correspondence will be sent to the parent/carer/young person.

Parent/carer/young person will be informed of the outcome within 5 days of the hearing. Full details of the decision will be provided including:

An explanation of:

- whether they have upheld the local authority's original decision;
- why they reached that decision;
- how the review was conducted;
- the factors considered in reaching their decision;
- which other agencies or departments were consulted as part of the review, if any.

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

If you believe there has been an administrative fault, at any time during your appeal, with the way Reading Borough Council has handled your appeal, you may contact the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSO) who investigates complaints about Councils:

PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH (Tel: 0300 061 0641) www.lgo.org.uk

If a parent considers that the decision of the independent appeal panel is flawed on public law grounds, they may seek to challenge the decision by applying for a judicial review.

11. How to make a complaint or seek remedy for an issue with transport

If things go wrong, the School Transport Service will endeavour to rectify the situation swiftly, to the satisfaction of all parties, as long as the solution is not outside the boundaries of this policy

For issues identified by schools or families that require a remedy relating to the delivery of service from the provider e.g.:

- lateness of transport
- changing schedule (within policy reasons; e.g. sickness, INSET days etc.)

Please refer to your travel schedule and contact the operator directly in the first instance. This will likely remedy your concern quicker than reporting to a third party first. If you have



an issue that persists, please contact the School Transport service on school.transport@reading.gov.uk

Any pupil, parent or carer wishing to make a formal complaint relating to school travel assistance arrangements, should contact the Customer Relations Team:

Call: 0118 937 3787

Write:

Freepost RTLS-CKGX-RKLL

Reading Borough Council

Customer Relations Team

Bridge Street

Reading RG1 2LU

Email us at: complaints@reading.gov.uk