

**PORTSMOUTH TRAVEL ASSISTANCE
STATEMENT FOR POST 16 LEARNERS WITH
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND
DISABILITIES**

February 2024

Section one: Introduction

1. Portsmouth City Council and its partners have written this Transport Statement to ensure that young people aged 16-19 in Portsmouth are informed and supported with regard to the transport that is available to them to help them access their learning.
2. This statement has been written in accordance with Section 509 of the Education Act 1996 (amended by 2002 Act) and amendments made to the 1996 Act by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (Sections 54 and 57). This policy statement gives consideration to the Department for Education, Post 16 Transport to Education and Training October 2017 statutory guidance for local authorities.
3. There is no statutory entitlement to transport for young people attending Post 16 education (even for young people who had an entitlement when at school) but young people or their parent/carer can apply to be considered for a discretionary award of transport if they have an Education Health and Care Plan.
4. This document provides information about the range of concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for young people aged 16-19 studying in or close to Portsmouth, and who provides them. It also sets out how Portsmouth City Council will assist with travel expenses for some Post-16 students with an Education Health and Care Plan where there is evidence of Exceptional Circumstances.
5. For information about Portsmouth's travel assistance policy for children of statutory school aged i.e. aged 5-16 see the separate "Portsmouth Travel Assistance Policy for Children of Statutory School Age (5-16)".
6. Support is not normally available for students aged 19 or over to start a new¹ course. To request an additional assessment to be made to establish why it is necessary for the Local Authority, and not the student or the student's family, to make the travel arrangements contact the adult social care helpline on 023 9268 0810 or by email on ASCoppdAdmin@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

¹ Our definition of a new course is one where the named qualification, learning aims, outcomes, unit/course code or title of the course differ to the previous year. For example an 'A' level in maths delivered over 2 years with the qualification being awarded only at the end of the completion of the second year, is considered a continuing course.

Where a student follows a programme of study such as a Level 1 course the first year, and progresses on to the Level 2, the next, or completes a series of courses where the outcomes differ each year and there is no requirement to progress to the second or further years to successfully complete each year, this is NOT considered a continuing course.

7. Portsmouth will not consider assistance with travel to fee paying schools or colleges, unless the school has been named in a pupil's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or is the nearest school considered by Portsmouth City Council's SEN team as able to meet the needs of the pupil.
8. The statement applies to young people residing in the Portsmouth City area (Post codes PO1 - PO6). Learners not resident within the post code area should refer to the transport policy issued by their own Local Authority. Where a young person lives at more than one address they will be assessed using the address of their main home. Where time is split equally between two addresses, the address of the parent in receipt of child benefit will be used.
9. The statement covers the period 31 May 2024 to 30 May 2025.

Section Two: Eligibility for Travel Assistance

10. There is no statutory entitlement to travel assistance for post 16 learners. Travel assistance is provided only for post 16 learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and who have an Education and Health Care Plan who also meet the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria (see paras 13-20 below). Travel assistance is not the provision of arranged transport free of charge, there is a contribution to the cost of any arranged transport.
11. Discounts and concessionary fares may be available to learners through individual education and training providers. Links to their schemes are given at Appendix A, along with contact details to receive the most up to date information.
12. When a course of study is agreed with a learning provider it may be possible to apply for support with travel as set out in Pages 10-13. Please check the travel assistance available with your individual education provider before an application for transport assistance is made to Portsmouth City Council.
13. Some young people with SEND will be eligible for a free bus pass under the national scheme for concessionary bus travel (which also includes the free bus passes for older people). The [Portsmouth eligibility criteria mean that these passes are available to people who:](#)
 - a. are blind or partially sighted, profoundly or severely deaf, without speech
 - b. have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to walk
 - c. have long term loss of the use of both arms or do not have arms
 - d. have a learning disability – a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning
14. For more information and to apply for a disabled person's bus pass and a companion pass for those who are unable to travel alone on public transport go to the [Council's website](#).

Travel Assistance Provided under Exceptional Circumstances Criteria

15. Post 16 students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may be eligible for help under the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria (ECC). Portsmouth City Council recognises the difference that travel assistance can make to the lives of some vulnerable children and young people. However, the funding available for such support is limited and under continued pressure, so the ECC aims to ensure that transport assistance is allocated to those most in need.
16. All applications for non-statutory transport assistance will be assessed using the Student Eligibility Grid, a copy of which is attached at Appendix B.
17. Every application for home to school/college transport will be considered on an individual basis and points will be awarded in accordance with the Student Eligibility Grid. Where a need is considered to be high (70+ points) transport will be offered subject to the relevant contribution. Where points are less than 70, transport will be declined. Where an applicant wishes to appeal against the decision, a letter outlining the reasons can be sent to the Access and Entitlement Officer as outlined in the appeals process at Appendix C.
18. A contribution towards the cost of providing transport for Post-16 students will be payable for each young person travelling. Parent/carers who do not meet the criteria for low income will have to make a contribution of £600.00 per annum, payable in 3 termly instalments of £200.00, in advance.
19. Parents/carers, who meet the criteria for low income, will have to make a financial contribution of £495.00 per annum payable in 3 termly instalments of £165.00, in advance. Families receiving travel assistance through a Personal Budget (see paragraphs 32-34) are not required to make a financial contribution.
20. Parent/carers who receive any of the following benefits are considered to meet the criteria for low income:
 - Income Support
 - Income based Job Seekers Allowance
 - Income based Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Maximum level of Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit - your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
21. Young people who receive any of these benefits in their own right will also be considered to be from a low income family.
22. To apply for travel assistance please complete an application form on the Portsmouth SEN Local Offer website
<https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/services/701/>.

Privilege Places

23. Parents of children with an EHCP who do not meet the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria may apply for a Privilege Place. If a pupil is successful in being awarded a Privilege Place then they are transported on a Home to School vehicle suitable for their needs and picked up/set down at a central point up to one mile from the home address. Privilege Places are available only where there is spare capacity in a vehicle used by children who meet the Statutory Criteria or Exceptional Circumstances Criteria. Decisions on the allocation of any Privilege Places will be taken based on the pupil's special needs and any impact on the other pupils travelling.
24. Applications for Privilege Places are made on an annual basis. The decision about the allocation of Privilege Places is made after the travel assistance for all pupils meeting the Statutory Criteria and Exceptional Circumstances Criteria has been agreed, and therefore may be notified close to the start of the relevant term. The place may be withdrawn with 10 days' notice at any time, if it is needed by a child meeting the Statutory or Exceptional Circumstances Criteria, or where routes are changed or re-tendered, or where the number of children on a route needs to be reduced.
25. The price of a privilege seat is currently² £1050.00 payable in 3 termly instalments of £350, paid in advance.
26. To request travel assistance via a Privilege Place email htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

Section Three: The Travel Assistance Offer

27. Travel assistance will only be provided at the beginning and end of the school/ college day, and only on the days that the young person is required to be in school/ college. Travel assistance is not provided to enable young people to attend extra-curricular activities or other commitments outside school hours.
28. Travel assistance will be provided in a safe and cost effective manner, taking account of the young person's specific needs, with regard to the best use of the Council's resources, and having regard to the duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel on journeys to and from places of education in the area. The travel arrangements will also take into account the need to prepare young people for adult life and promote independence, including through supporting independent travel where appropriate. The main travel arrangements are:
29. **Bus or Rail Pass** - This is a free pass for use on public transport and is generally provided for children and young people who meet the Statutory Criteria under the "walking distances" and "extended rights" eligibility criteria.
30. **Transport Vehicles** - Vehicles and drivers are provided by a suitable qualified registered commercial provider working to contractual standards set out by

² Price correct for 2024/25 school year.

Portsmouth City Council. A Passenger Assistant (escort) will not usually be provided for a young person in Post 16 provision unless there are exceptional circumstances supported by the school/college or appropriate professional and agreed by the local authority.

31. Young people are often picked up and set down at a central point (up to one mile from the home address) rather than at their home address. Parents/carers are responsible for the safety of their child until they board and after they exit the vehicle. Where there is evidence that a parent/carer is failing to meet their child on a regular basis a review of entitlement to transport will be made.
32. Where the distance between a pick-up or drop-off point and home or school/college is less than one mile the City Council will not normally provide transport for that part of the journey. Requests for transport to be provided for a home to pick-up point of less than one mile will be considered on an individual basis and will be dependent upon the medical needs of the pupil and or parent/carer and should be supported by appropriate medical evidence.
33. Transport will be arranged so as to be non-stressful. Best practice indicates that the maximum journey time should be no longer than 75 minutes for secondary aged pupils and above. However consideration should be given to traffic conditions within the city. Exceptions may apply for operational reasons, although individual needs will be assessed. Longer journey may be necessary for pupils attending special education needs schools and colleges outside of Portsmouth.
34. **Car Mileage Allowance** - A mileage allowance of 45p per mile will be payable, payable for two round trip journeys per day. Parents/carers should check their car insurance policy, as it may be invalidated if they do not inform their insurance company. The mileage allowance is paid monthly onto a prepaid card, similar to a debit card.
35. **Personal Budget Transport** - Pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan who are eligible for travel assistance can request a personal transport budget. For more information email htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.
36. The Personal Budget is paid onto a prepaid card, similar to a debit card. It can be used however the parent chooses, as long as the young person gets to and from school on time and in a way that ensures their safety, encourages their attendance and does not negatively affect their ability to learn once they are at school/college. Examples of how Personal Transport Budgets include:
 - a. Buying a travel pass for a parent or a trusted adult to accompany the young person to and from school.
 - b. Covering the costs of driving or cycling with the young person to school/college.
 - c. Sharing the costs of the school/college run with another parent such as shared driving responsibilities, walking buses or joint taxi bookings.
37. The amount of the Personal Budget, including elements of mileage, will be paid at a rate determined by the local authority at the time. More details can be found

in Portsmouth City Council's Local Offer.

(<https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/documents/personal-transport-budgets/>).

38. **Access to Independent Travel Training** - Travel training supports children, young people and adults to get more out of life through learning the skills and building confidence to use public transport safely. Independent Travel Training is currently provided through some courses offered at Havant and South Downs College and City of Portsmouth College. For more information about accessing support for independent travel please email htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

Section Four: Additional Important Information

39. **Change of Address** Parents should notify Portsmouth City Council of any change of address giving as much prior notice as possible but a minimum of 10 working days. Students who change their home address will have their eligibility re-assessed based on the new address. Where a student has been entitled to a bus pass the old bus pass must be returned to the Access & Entitlement Officer before a new bus pass can be issued.
40. **Unacceptable Behaviour** Where a young person is unable to travel safely to school/college, including where the young person's behaviour is such that it may threaten the safety of others, the council reserves the right to suspend transport support for up to two weeks. Parents would normally have been contacted by the transport team, including through a formal warning letter from the Integrated Transport Unit, before such a suspension is made. Should a suspension be considered necessary the parents/carers will be responsible for transporting their young person to school during this period. Transport will then be re-instated.
41. Where there are ongoing issues an officer of the Local Authority will discuss with parents/carers the possible withdrawal of transport and the alternative arrangements which may need to be made, which might include the offer of a public bus pass or personal budget.
42. **Attendance:** Where attendance at school/college is irregular the Local Authority has the right to review transport assistance and withdraw it if attendance remains unacceptable.
43. **Armed Forces Covenant** Portsmouth City Council has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant. Portsmouth City Council will therefore ensure that the needs of members of the armed services are considered in line with the terms of the covenant when application for transport using the exceptional circumstances criteria are assessed.
44. **Health and Safety and Medical needs:** Health and safety information provided by parents/carers and head teachers/ college principal is gathered as part of the application process. This is then assessed and relevant information will be provided to passenger assistants. All of the Portsmouth passenger assistants have basic first aid training and will have received the information provided by parents about any health needs. Routine medication will not be administered on the journey to and from school. In a medical emergency the passenger assistant or driver will ring 999.

45. **Appeals:** Parents/carers have the right to appeal the decisions made by Portsmouth City Council officers when assessing Travel Assistance for Post 16 Learners. The appeals process is outlined in the Home to School Travel Appeal process detailed in Appendix C.
46. **Assessment Errors:** Where assistance is found to have been granted in error, notice of four weeks will normally be given that travel will be withdrawn to allow families to make other arrangements.
47. Where entitlement has been denied in error transport will be arranged as soon as possible and consideration will be given to reimbursing parents/carers retrospectively, with a time limit of the start of the academic year in which the error was discovered.
48. **Lost and Stolen Bus Passes** Where a bus pass is lost there will be an administration charge made by the bus company to the parents/carers for a replacement. Stolen bus passes will not incur an administration charge if evidence in the form of a police crime number is provided.
49. **Complaints** Portsmouth City Council takes complaints seriously and if needed the complaints procedure can be found at Portsmouth City Council www.portsmouth.gov.uk. In the first instance complaints should be put in writing to:
- Complaints Manager
 - Portsmouth City Council
 - Civic Offices
 - Guildhall Square
 - Portsmouth
 - Hants, PO1 2EA
50. **Contacts** The most up to date information on who to contact can be found on the Home to School Transport page at www.portsmouth.gov.uk/learning.

Appendix A: **Useful Contacts:**

Access and Entitlement Officer
Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
Hants
PO1 2EA

Tel: 023 9282 2251

www.portsmouth.gov.uk

First Bus Travel Shop
The Hard Interchange
Portsmouth
Hants
PO1 3PA

Tel: 0333 014 3480

www.firstgroup.com

Stagecoach
Walton Road
Portsmouth
Hants
PO6 1TU

Tel: 0345 121 0190

www.stagecoachbus.com

Government Website

www.gov.uk

Colleges within the City of Portsmouth (PO1-PO6)

City of Portsmouth College
Tangier Road
Portsmouth
Hants
PO3 6PZ

Telephone: 023 9266 7521

www.city-of-portsmouth-college.ac.uk

Local Colleges outside of the City of Portsmouth (PO1-PO6)

Havant & South Downs College (Havant Campus)
New Road
Havant
Hants
PO9 1QL

Telephone: 023 9387 9999

www.hsdac.ac.uk

Havant and South Downs College (South Downs College)
College Road
Waterlooville
Hants
PO7 8AA

Telephone: 023 9387 9999

www.hsdac.ac.uk

Oaklands Catholic School and 6th Form College
Stakes Hill Road
Waterlooville
Hants
PO7 7BW

Telephone: 023 9225 9214

www.oaklandscatholicschool.org

City of Portsmouth College and Havant and South Downs College provide a range of discounted travel options. For the latest information see their websites:

<https://www.city-of-portsmouth-college.ac.uk/school-leavers/student-support/travel-support/>

<https://www.hsdac.ac.uk/life-at-hsdac/finance-and-travel-support/student-travel/>

Appendix B: Student Eligibility Grid

	Criteria	Points	How points are awarded
Parent and Family Factors			
1	The applicant is primary school age and the parent or carer of the applicant has other PRIMARY school aged children to escort to their CATCHMENT school, nearer school or another school allocated by Portsmouth City Council Admissions Team. Or the parent/carer has older children with special educational needs or disabilities to escort to their designated place of education and the distance between the education establishment and the home would prevent all of the students from arriving at their educational establishment before the start of the school day.	20	<p>The Access and Entitlement Officer will be responsible for checking walking distances.</p> <p>Evidence of parent/carer working hours may be required. The School Admissions Service will be contacted to ensure parent/carers have requested their DESIGNATED CATCHMENT SCHOOL as a first preference.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but the decision may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
2	Difficult Family Circumstances	20	<p>Evidence may be taken from an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or Single Assessment Framework (SAF) or Child in Need Plan (CIN) where one is in place. The EHA/SAF/CIN must support the need for transport assistance to school for the child named in the application.</p> <p>Where there is no EHA/SAF/CIN in place or a parent has refused permission to use the EHA/SAF/CIN, evidence from a medical practitioner may be considered.</p>

			<p>Evidence from Portsmouth City Council Housing may be used where the applicant is living in temporary accommodation or a refuge.</p> <p>Points may also be awarded where there is evidence of domestic abuse; or where a young person in Year 10/11 moves house and the distance between the new house and the school is over the statutory walking distance; or where a parent/carer of a primary aged child or older child with special educational needs or disabilities has a sudden debilitating illness, which makes it difficult for them to escort that child to school.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
3	You are the only adult living in the household.	10	<p>Evidence may be requested. Portsmouth City Council database will be used to evidence this information.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
4	<p>A family or young person (if the young person is applying for transport in their own right) who receives any of the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support • Income-based Jobseekers Allowance • Income-related Employment and Support Allowance 	10	<p>Parent/carers/young people will need to provide a current benefit award letter detailing benefits received, or a copy of a current TC602 Tax Credit Award Letter (all pages).</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 • The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit • Child Tax Credit only, provided your annual household income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) does not exceed £16,190. Anyone entitled to Working Tax Credit is not entitled to free meals regardless of income • Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit • Universal Credit 		
5	A parent/carer who has access to a motor vehicle which they are licenced to drive. If NO	5	Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.
6	A parent/carer with a medical or mental health condition who is the only adult responsible for taking a PRIMARY aged child to school, or an older child where there is evidence of special educational needs and disabilities who is unable to walk unaccompanied. Adults with parental responsibility who do not live in the same household may still be expected to escort their children to school, i.e. non-resident parent, other family member.	5	<p>Current and relevant medical evidence will be required from a health professional which specifically states that the parent/carer would not be able to escort their PRIMARY aged child or older child with special educational needs and disabilities from home to school and back home.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
7	A parent/carer who is a full time primary carer for another family member living in the household.	5	You will need to provide evidence that you are in receipt of 'Carers Allowance' which has been awarded to support a family member living in the household and responsibility for their care would prevent you from walking a PRIMARY aged child, or

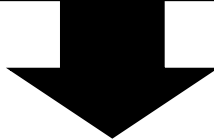
			<p>older child with special educational needs and disabilities to school.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
8	<p>You and your partner work and your working hours mean it is not possible for you to escort your PRIMARY aged child/children or older child with special educational needs and disabilities who is unable to walk unaccompanied to school.</p>	5	<p>Parents/carers will need to provide a letter from their employer stating the start and finish times of their working day.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
Child and Young Person Factors			
9	<p>You are a young person who is attending college or 6th form or other learning provider and were entitled to school transport because of your special educational needs or disability in the year before you reached 16 years of age.</p> <p>Or attended a mainstream school with and Education, Health and Care Plan that specifies full time support</p>	20	<p>Evidence will only be required if you were living outside of the PO1-PO6 post code area at the time you were receiving transport assistance.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
10	<p>Your child is attending a specialist resource provision allocated by the special educational needs and disabilities team.</p>	10	<p>You will not normally be required to provide evidence.</p>
11	<p>Your child or young person has a physical disability or a learning disability and has an Education Health and Care Plan</p>	10	<p>Parents/carers can give permission for evidence to be used from the Education Health and Care Plan.</p>

			Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
12	The child or young person does not have an Education Health and Care Plan but has a medical condition which prevents them from walking to school.	10	Supporting medical evidence from a health professional will be required which specifically states that the child or young person is unable to walk to school. Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
13	You are a secondary aged pupil or young person over 16 years of age and you are unable to travel independently.	5	Evidence must be provided confirming that the young person is unable to travel independently from a GP or other health professional. Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
14	You are a student or parent/carer of a Post 16 student with special educational needs or disabilities and you have to walk significantly further (more than one mile) than the usual statutory walking distances outlined on Pages 4 and 5 of this document.	10	You will not normally be required to provide evidence. Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
Environmental Factors			
15	There is no public transport available on the usual walking route from the child/young person's home to school.	5	You will not normally be required to provide evidence. Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.

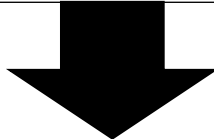
APPENDIX C

HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT APPEAL PROCESS

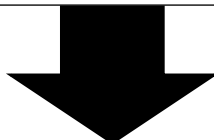
Stage 1 - The Access and Entitlement Officer assessed the application for Home to School/College Transport using the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria Student Eligibility Grid and if transport is declined the parent/carer/young person may:



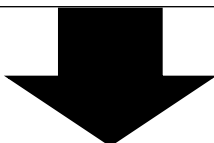
Challenge the decision (within 20 working days) on the basis of:
Entitlement
Distance measurement
Route Safety
Points awarded.



Stage 2 - The Access and Entitlement Officer passes the application to the Special Educational Needs Case Management Decision meeting who review the application and supporting evidence. If the appeal is unsuccessful parents/carers or their representatives can challenge the decision (within 20 working days.)



Stage 3 - The Access and Entitlement Officer prepares and presents the case on behalf of Portsmouth City Council to the Inclusion Transport Appeal Panel. The parent/carer/young person or their representatives are invited to attend and present their case. If the appeal is unsuccessful the parent/carer/young person can challenge the decision, in writing to the Deputy Director of Education (within 20 working days)



Stage 4 - The Deputy Director of Education reviews the case and parents/carers/young people are informed of the decision in writing, within 40 working days. The Deputy Director of Education decision letter gives details of how to escalate a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.