



**HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE POLICY  
AND  
PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL'S TRANSPORT  
STATEMENT FOR POST 16 LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL  
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**

Updated October 2015

## Introduction

1. The legal responsibility for ensuring a child's attendance at school rests with the child's parent/carer. Generally, parents/carers are expected to make their own arrangements for ensuring that their child gets to and from school. The Local Authority is under a statutory duty to provide transport as set out in Education Act 1996 which outlines the categories of children and young persons of compulsory school age (5-16) who are eligible for free school transport. The Council's policy is to provide free school transport (referred to in the Act as "travel assistance") to those categories of eligible children in accordance with its legal obligations. Otherwise it will be at the Local Authority's discretion, where there are exceptional circumstances.
2. This revised document incorporates the changes that Portsmouth City Council has made to its home to school transport provision following a consultation with stakeholders that was completed in February 2014. This policy is effective from 31st May 2015 and applies to any application received thereafter. The policy will be subject to regular review.
3. The Home to School Transport Policy and Portsmouth City Council's Transport Statement for Post 16 Learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities outlines the criteria for which transport assistance might be provided for:
  - a. children of statutory school age, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, attending mainstream schools and special schools or a resourced provision;
  - b. young people with special educational needs and disabilities in a further education setting.
4. Transport assistance will be provided where the Statutory Criteria (SC) are met and on non-statutory grounds where the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria (ECC) are met.
5. The layout of the document is aimed at helping parents and carers to find their way through if they believe they are entitled to free home to school transport. It is divided in three parts:
  - a. Statutory Transport Criteria (Part One).
  - b. Portsmouth City Council's Transport Statement for Post 16 Learners in Further
  - c. Education and Continued Learners with special educational needs and disabilities (Part 2)
  - d. Exceptional Circumstances Criteria (Part 3)
  - e. Important information (Part 4)
  - f. Appendices - forms, agreements and terminology (Part 5)

**Part One: Statutory criteria for transport assistance for children of statutory school age**

**a) Criteria for Travel Assistance to mainstream schools**

<b>SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN - YEAR R-YEAR 11 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Who Can We Help?</b>	<b>What Are The Criteria?</b>
1	Children living further than the statutory walking distance from their designated catchment school or a nearer school.	<p>Children in Year R to aged 8 years, who live over 2 miles (but less than 6 miles) from their designated catchment school measured by the shortest walking route between their home and their school, qualifying special school, or a nearer school.</p> <p>Children aged 8 years to Year 11 who live over 3 miles (but less than 6 miles) from their designated catchment school measured by the shortest walking route between their home and their school, qualifying special school or a nearer school.</p> <p>Generally, journey times must not exceed 45 minutes.</p> <p>Where parents express a preference for the designated catchment school, special school or a nearer school, and the school is unable to offer a place, free transport will be offered to the next nearest school or special school with a place available, providing the distance criteria outlined above is met.</p>
2	Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan.	<p>Children attending their designated catchment school, or a nearer school or qualifying special school who are unable to walk to school by reason of their SEN, disability or mobility problem.</p> <p>Generally, journey times must not exceed 45 minutes.</p>
3	Children of disabled parents	<p>A single parent or both parents who have a disability must provide medical evidence from a professional stating the impact of their condition on their ability to accompany their child to school. The child must attend their designated catchment school, qualifying special school or a nearer school.</p> <p>Generally, journey times must not exceed 45 minutes.</p>

<b>FAMILIES ON LOW INCOME WITH PRIMARY AGED CHILDREN - AGE 8 TO AGE 10 YEARS</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Who Can We Help?</b>	<b>What Are The Criteria?</b>
4	Parents/carers with financial responsibility for a child and who are on a low income as outlined in the criteria.	Children aged 8 to age 10, attending their designated catchment school or nearer school, who live over 2 miles (but less than 6 miles) from their school measured by the shortest walking route <b>AND</b> who are entitled to free school meals or whose parents are entitled to the <b>MAXIMUM</b> level of working tax credit.
<b>FAMILIES ON LOW INCOME WITH SECONDARY AGED CHILDREN - YEAR 7-YEAR 11</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Who Can We Help?</b>	<b>What Are The Criteria?</b>
5	Parents/carers with financial responsibility for a child and who are on a low income as outlined in the criteria.	Children in Year 7 to Year 11 who live over 2 miles (but less than 6 miles) from their home address to one of the three nearest schools, measured by the shortest walking route <b>AND</b> who are entitled to free school meals or whose parents are entitled to the <b>MAXIMUM</b> level of working tax credit.
6	Parents/carers with financial responsibility for a child and who are on a low income as outlined in the criteria.	Children in Year 7 to Year 11 who live over 2 miles (but not more than 15 miles) from their home address to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief.

6. Children who do not meet the statutory criteria for home to school transport assistance, outlined on Pages 3 and 4 of this Policy, may be eligible for transport under the exceptional circumstances criteria.(see Part three).

### **Looked After Children**

7. Looked after children with a statement of special educational needs or Educational Health and Care Plan, who are moved out of Portsmouth (PO1-PO6) by Children's Social Care will have their travel assistance met by Education for the first two weeks only, thereafter any transport costs will be met by Children's Social Care.

### **Concessionary Travel (Privilege Place Scheme)**

8. A spare place on a contract vehicle may be offered to a child who is not entitled to transport assistance taking account of the pupil's special needs and any impact on any other pupil's currently travelling. It will be withdrawn if it becomes clear that it is needed by an entitled child or if re-tendering or re-planning changes the route or reduces the number of concessionary seats. A flat rate charge will be made (set annually by the Local Authority).

## **Part Two: Post 16 Transport Statement for Learners in Further Education and Continued Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities**

### **1. Introduction**

Portsmouth City Council and its partners have written this Transport Statement to ensure that young people in Portsmouth are informed and supported with regard to the transport that is available to them to help them access their learning

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 February 2014 Post 16 Transport to Education and Training statutory guidance for local authorities.

### **2. Residency**

This Statement applies to young people residing in the Portsmouth City area (PO1-PO6). Learners not resident within this post code area should refer to the transport policy statement issued by their Local Authority.

### **3. Statement**

This Statement covers the period 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015-31<sup>st</sup> May 2016.

### **Concessionary fares, discounts subsidies, passes or travel cards available for young people and who provides them**

### **4. Support provided by local education and training providers**

Discounts and concessionary fares may be available to learners through individual education and training providers. Details of their schemes are given on Pages 11-14.

When a course of study has been agreed with the provider of your choice you may need to apply to them for support with travel as set out in Pages 11-14. Please check the travel assistance available with your individual education provider before an application for transport assistance is made to Portsmouth City Council.

### **5. Support provided by Portsmouth City Council**

There is no automatic entitlement to assisted transport once a student is over the age of 16. However, the local authority has agreed to assist with travel expenses for post-16 students with special educational needs or disability where there is evidence of exceptional circumstances. Families who apply for transport on grounds of their exceptional circumstances must complete a Home to School or Home to College Travel Assistance application form which is available on the Portsmouth City Council website or from Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Guildhall Walk, Portsmouth, Hants PO1 2EA, from any Portsmouth City Council local offices or local colleges. The personal circumstances of all young people/families and all supporting evidence, submitted with the application form will be considered on an individual

basis. For those young people/families who are considered to have high need, Portsmouth City Council will contribute to the cost of transport. Young people/families considered to have medium need will be referred to the Inclusion Support Panel, a multi-agency panel made up of professionals and parents. The Inclusion Support Panel will make a decision, based on the needs of the young person or their family. Young people/families considered to have low levels of need will be required to submit further evidence or transport assistance will be declined.

**PLEASE NOTE:** A contribution towards the cost of providing the transport will be payable for each young person travelling, of £495 per annum, paid in 3 termly instalments in advance, Portsmouth City Council will fund the balance of transport costs. The amount of contribution will be reviewed annually.

**Income: .Where a family is entitled to any of the benefits listed below the contribution charge will be waived:**

Income Support,  
Income based Job Seekers Allowance  
Employment and Support Allowance (income based)  
Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999  
Maximum level of Working Tax Credit

Young people who receive any of these benefits in their own right will also be considered to be from a low income family

## **6. Age**

The student must be under 25 years of age on 1 September prior to the start of the course.

## **7. Which college/6th form/learning provider?**

If transport is agreed travel assistance will be given to the nearest college/6th form/learning provider considered by the Local Authority to be the most suitable placement for the student and one which offers a course or programme which is designed specifically to meet the special educational needs of the student concerned. If the course or programme is not specifically designed to meet the needs of those with SEN, travel assistance will be given to the nearest college/6th form/learning provider offering an appropriate course. The Local Authority will have regard to any preference the individual may have for a particular institution based on their religion or belief.

Travel assistance may be given where the student continues to attend the special school or school with a sixth form. Such students will qualify for transport assistance subject to the following conditions:

- The student being subject to a statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan which outlines the educational provision to be made at age 16+;

- The journey being over three miles **unless**:
  - the student is unable to walk that distance (and evidence is provided to support that difficulty).
  - the student needs to be accompanied by an adult and no adult is available to accompany the student.

Assistance with transport for students with learning difficulties or disabilities will be reviewed annually.

## **8. Students attending colleges/6<sup>th</sup> forms/learning providers outside of Portsmouth**

If transport is agreed and if, in the opinion of the Local Authority, there is no suitable course available to learners within the Portsmouth City area, they may make an application to Portsmouth City Council for assistance with transport to neighbouring Local Authority education and training providers. However, transport will be declined if it is deemed that a suitable course is available at a nearer learning provider as measured from the home address.

## **9. Independent Travel Training**

Portsmouth City Council is working towards the introduction of independent travel training schemes to enable young people (often with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) to travel on public transport independently. Please contact the Access and Entitlement Officer for details of the scheme.

## **10. Applying for assistance with transport**

Students wishing to apply for help with transport can do so by completing Portsmouth City Council's Transport Application form, details of which can be found at <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/learning-and-schools/schools/transport-to-schools-and-colleges.aspx>

or they can be obtained from the reception of the Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2EA. For further details please contact the Family Information Service on 023 92392 or visit <http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/learning/1073.html>.

## **11. Appeals**

Parents have a right to appeal the decisions made by Portsmouth City Council officers when assessing Home to School Transport applications. The appeals process is outlined in the Home to School Travel Appeal process detailed at Appendix A.

## **Useful Contacts**

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

First Bus  
Empress Road  
Southampton  
Hants  
SO14 0JW  
Telephone 0870 010 6022

First Hampshire & Dorset  
226 Portswood Road  
Southampton  
SO17 9BE  
Customer Call Centre 088870 010 6022

Portsmouth City Council  
[www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

Stagecoach Coastline  
Walton Road  
Langstone Point  
Farlington  
Portsmouth  
PO6 1TU  
0845 1210170  
[www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com)

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)



### **Colleges/Schools within the City of Portsmouth (PO1-PO6)**

Highbury College  
Tudor Crescent  
Portsmouth  
Hants  
PO6 2SA  
Telephone: 023 9238 3131  
[www.highbury.ac.uk](http://www.highbury.ac.uk)

Portsmouth College  
Tangier Road  
Copnor  
Portsmouth  
Hants  
PO3 6PZ  
Telephone 023 9266 7521  
[www.portsmouth-college/6th form//learning providers.ac.uk](http://www.portsmouth-college/6th form//learning providers.ac.uk)

Charter Academy  
6<sup>th</sup> Form  
Hyde Park Road  
Portsmouth  
PO5 4HL  
Telephone: 023 9282 4204

### **Colleges/Schools outside of the City of Portsmouth (PO1-PO6)**

Havant College  
New Road  
Havant  
PO9 1QL  
Telephone 023 9248 3856  
[www.havant.ac.uk](http://www.havant.ac.uk)

South Downs College  
College Road  
Waterlooville  
Hants  
PO7 8AA  
Telephone 023 9279 7979  
[www.southdowns.ac.uk](http://www.southdowns.ac.uk)

Oaklands Catholic School  
6<sup>th</sup> Form  
Stakes Hill Road  
Waterlooville  
Hants  
PO7 7BW  
023 92 259214

## Havant College

Discount/Concession	Eligibility	Restrictions	Notes	Part time Students	Contact details	How to access support
Travel allowance to help with public/own transport. Students received £200 to help with transport pa, paid over 3 terms.	Full time students.	Students have to be 8 miles from college.	Introduced to enable students choice in course and college.	Not applicable for students aged 16-19.	The Finance Office Havant College New Road Havant PO9 1QL e-mail finance@havant.ac.uk	Leaflet promoting scheme.  Application form  Completed and returned to The Finance Office  Tel: 02392 714013
Travel allowance to help with transport by whichever means most appropriate/cost effective.	Full time students from low income families.	Paid to low income families, independent students or change in circumstances (redundancy etc)  Must live over 4 miles	Considered on individual merit  Receive £ 200 pa, paid over 3 terms.	N/A	As above	As above  Application approved by Director of Finance and Human Resources
Bursary £1200	Criteria  As defined by the Government	Must meet criteria	6 students eligible for 2013-14	Full time	As above	As above

All information is correct at April 2015. It would be advisable for students to check current prices and conditions with college for verification.

## Highbury College

Discount/Concession	Eligibility	Restrictions	Part time Students	Contact details	How to access support
<p>Highbury College offer the following travel assistance to enable all eligible full time students over the age of 16 to access the course of their choice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A First or Stagecoach bus pass for use during Term Time or</li> <li>• A Travel allowance of up to £100 per term for those who travel by train, car or ferry or</li> <li>• Up to £300 per academic year for those students from the Isle of Wight or</li> <li>• An allowance towards a bike and bike safety equipment</li> </ul> <p>Discounted rate bus passes for a whole or half term are also available for any student to purchase.</p> <p>Free student parking is available at the Cosham and Northarbour Campuses and free parking for Blue Badge holders is available next to the Highbury College Portsmouth Centre Campus.</p>	<p>Eligibility for a free bus pass or contribution to the cost of a bike or other travel costs is dependent on family income and type of course. All students can access a discounted bus pass.</p>	<p>"Full cost" courses are not eligible for travel assistance.</p>	<p>Park time students can apply for a discounted bus pass.</p>	<p>Student Welfare Team Highbury College 02392 8954/8947</p> <p>E-mail Welfare@ Highbury.ac.uk. URL: <a href="http://www.highbury.ac.uk">www.highbury.ac.uk</a></p>	<p>Students should apply to Highbury College as soon as they receive an offer. Application forms for financial support during 2015-16, including transport, will be available in June.</p>

All information is correct at May 2015.

## Portsmouth College

Discount/Concession	Eligibility	Restrictions	Notes	Part time Students	Contact details	How to access support
Bus Passes (7 Day My Journey Portsmouth Passes – valid term-time only) £80 per term or supplied via Portsmouth College Bursary for eligible students.	16-18	Living more than 2 km away in straight line measurement.  Attendance over 90% at all sessions to qualify for on- going support after Term 1.	An equivalent allowance of up to £60 is paid where there is no suitable public transport.  Students living outside PO1 – PO6 should contact Student Services to discuss alternatives	Courses of over 60 hours or more per academic year may be eligible for support	Student Finance Officer Student Services Department Portsmouth College 023 9266 7521 Ext 397 amanda.raymond@tpc.ac.uk	Application form at enrolment on course of study
Bike Scheme up to £120	Full Time	See Travel Policy – Term 1 & 2 only. Safety accessories required.	Not eligible for other travel schemes		Student Finance Officer Student Services Department Portsmouth College 023 9266 7521 Ext 397 amanda.raymond@tpc.ac.uk	

All information is correct at May 2014. It would be advisable for students to check current prices and conditions with colleges for verification.

## South Downs College

Discount/Concession	Eligibility	Restrictions	Notes	Part time Students	Contact details	How to access support
South Downs College offers subsidised travel for all full-time students.	Students aged 16-18	Must be on a full-time course (other than an HND/HNC).	Prices are dependent on where you live. Please refer to either First Bus or Stagecoach websites	N/A	Student Travel, Welfare & Financial Assistance, South Downs College, College Road, Waterlooville Hants, PO7 8AA 023 9279 7921 e-mail <a href="mailto:studentservices@southdowns.ac.uk">studentservices@southdowns.ac.uk</a> <a href="http://www.southdowns.ac.uk">www.southdowns.ac.uk</a>	Application forms will be available to download on the South Downs College website <a href="http://www.southdowns.ac.uk">www.southdowns.ac.uk</a> or refer to either First Bus or Stagecoach websites. <a href="http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/hampshire">www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/hampshire</a> <a href="http://www.stagecoach.com">www.stagecoach.com</a>
	Students aged 19+	Must be on a full-time course (other than HND/HNC) and they or parent/carer be in receipt of an eligible income-based benefit.	Prices are dependent on where you live. Please refer to either First Bus or Stagecoach websites	N/A	Student Travel, Welfare & Financial Assistance, South Downs College, College Road, Waterlooville Hants, PO7 8AA 023 9279 7921 e-mail <a href="mailto:studentservices@southdowns.ac.uk">studentservices@southdowns.ac.uk</a> <a href="http://www.southdowns.ac.uk">www.southdowns.ac.uk</a>	Application forms will be available to download on the South Downs College website <a href="http://www.southdowns.ac.uk">www.southdowns.ac.uk</a> or refer to either First Bus or Stagecoach websites. <a href="http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/hampshire">www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/hampshire</a> <a href="http://www.stagecoach.com">www.stagecoach.com</a>
	Students on HND/HNC courses plus any student aged 19+ on a full time course, not in receipt of benefit.	Students on HND/HNC courses are able to apply for a discounted pass, which is more economical than purchasing directly through the bus companies.	Prices are dependent on where you live. Please refer to either First Bus or Stagecoach websites	N/A	Student Travel, Welfare & Financial Assistance, South Downs College College Road, Waterlooville Hants, PO7 8AA 023 9279 7921 e-mail <a href="mailto:studentservices@southdowns.ac.uk">studentservices@southdowns.ac.uk</a> <a href="http://www.southdowns.ac.uk">www.southdowns.ac.uk</a>	Application forms; Please refer to either First Bus or Stagecoach websites. <a href="http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/hampshire">www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/hampshire</a> <a href="http://www.stagecoach.com">www.stagecoach.com</a>

All information is correct at March 2014

## Part Three: Non statutory assistance under the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria

### Exceptional Circumstances Criteria

1. Children and young people who do not meet the statutory criteria for home to school or home to college/learning provider transport assistance may be eligible for assisted travel under the exceptional circumstances criteria. Portsmouth City Council recognises the difference that transport 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 Exceptional Circumstance Criteria (ECC) aims to ensure that transport assistance is allocated to those most in need.
2. All applications for non-statutory transport assistance will be assessed using the ECC. The ECC was developed using the feedback from the Portsmouth City Council 2014 School Transport consultation. The consultation feedback has been collated under the following headings:

Parent Factors,  
Child Factors  
Environmental Factors

These headings are in line with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The responses that parents gave most frequently were accorded the highest priority e.g. other siblings to escort to school.

3. All applications for transport assistance under the ECC are assessed as a high, medium or low priority need. Each priority is determined by points that are allocated to the evidence within the application form. The threshold for points is:
  - a. **High** priority need - with a points total of over 60
  - b. **Medium** priority need - with a points total between 45 and 59
  - c. **Low** priority need - with a points total of 44 or less
4. Applications that meet a high priority need will be provided with transport assistance.
5. Where applications indicate a medium priority need, cases will be taken to the Inclusion Transport Appeal Panel (ITAP) for consideration. Membership of ITAP includes a range of professionals including teachers and parents which was one of the key recommendations requested by parents in the transport consultation referred to above.
6. Where applications are identified as a low priority need, the referrer or parents will be asked to submit additional evidence.
7. In cases where Inclusion Transport Appeal Panel does not support the request for transport assistance the applicant will be informed in writing within 20 days and will have the option to lodge an appeal to the Director of Children's & Adults Services.

8. ECC will be reviewed regularly by the Transport Appeal Panel who will make recommendations for change, if deemed necessary.

	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>How points are awarded</b>
<b>Parent and Family Factors</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>The applicant is primary aged and the parent/carer has other PRIMARY aged children to escort to their CATCHMENT school, or another school allocated by the Admissions Team. Or the parent/carer has other children with special educational needs and disabilities to escort to a special school or specialist resource provision and the distance between the school and the home would prevent all of the children from arriving at school before the start of the school day.</b>	<b>20</b>	<p><b>The Access and Entitlement Officer will be responsible for checking walking distances.</b></p> <p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but the decision may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</b></p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Difficult family circumstances</b>	<b>20</b>	<p><b>Evidence may be taken from a CAF, where one is in place.</b></p> <p><b>The CAF must support the need for transport assistance to school for the child named in the application.</b></p> <p><b>Where there is no CAF in place or a parent has refused permission to use the CAF, evidence from a medical practitioner may be considered.</b></p> <p><b>Evidence from Portsmouth City Council Housing may be used where the applicant is living in temporary accommodation or a refuge.</b></p> <p><b>Points may also be awarded where there is evidence of domestic abuse; or where a young person in</b></p>

			<p>Year 10/11 moves house and the distance between the new house and the school is over the statutory walking distance;</p> <p>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	A family or young person (if the young person is applying for transport in their own right) who receives any of the following benefits: Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (IBJSA), Income-based Employment and Support Allowance; support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; Child Tax Credit (provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income of less than £16190 (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) the guarantee element of State Pension Credit or maximum Working Tax Credits.	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>
5	A parent/carer who has access to	5	Points will be awarded at the



	a motor vehicle which they are licenced to drive. If NO		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 able to take a PRIMARY aged child to school, or an older child where there is evidence of special educational needs and disabilities. Adults with parental responsibility who do not live in the same household may still be expected to escort their children to school, ie non-resident parent, other family member.	5	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.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.
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 older child with special educational needs and disabilities to school.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.
8	You and your partner work, and your working hours mean it is not possible for you to escort your PRIMARY aged child/children or child with special educational needs and disabilities to school.	5	Parents/carers will need to provide a letter from their employer stating the start and finish times of their working day.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.
<b>Child and Young Person Factors</b>			
9	You are a young person who is	20	Evidence will only be required

	attending college or 6 <sup>th</sup> 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>if you were living outside of the PO1 to 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	Your child is attending a specialist resource provision or specialist nursery school allocated by the special educational needs team.	10	You will not normally be required to provide evidence.
11	Your child or young person has a physical disability or a learning disability and has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan	10	<p>Parents/carers can give permission for evidence to be used from the Statement of Special Education Needs or Education Health and Care Plan.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.</p>
12	The child or young person does not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan but has a medical condition which prevents them from walking to school	10	<p>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 or college.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.</p>
13	You are a secondary aged pupil or young person over 16 years of age and you are unable to travel independently.	5	<p>Evidence must be provided confirming that the young person is unable to travel independently from a GP or other health professional.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.</p>

14	You are a parent/carer of a primary aged child or secondary aged child with special educational needs or disabilities and you have to walk significantly further (more than one mile) than the statutory walking distances as outlined on Pages 3 and 4 of the Policy.	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 any subsequent appeal.
<b>Environmental Factors</b>			
15	There is no public transport available on the usual walking route from the child/young person's home to school or college.	5	You will not normally be required to provide evidence.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer and may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.

### **Explanatory Notes re calculating and evidence**

Every application for home to school transport will be considered on an individual basis and points will be awarded in accordance with the table above. Where a need is considered to be high, 60+ points transport will be provided, where a medium need is evidenced 45-59 points the application will automatically be considered by the Inclusion Support Panel and where there is low need less than 44 points more evidence may be requested or transport will be declined.

### **Armed Services Covenant**

Portsmouth City Council has signed up to the Armed Services 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 applications for transport using the exceptional circumstances criteria are assessed.

## **Part Four: Important information for Travel Assistance to Schools and Colleges or Learning Providers**

Travel assistance will automatically be considered when the Local Authority applies for a placement in a special school or resourced provision for a child. Transport entitlement will be reviewed for all pupils annually. For pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan transport will be reviewed at a child's or young person's Annual Review.

### **1. Travel Times**

Travel Assistance will only be given for travel to school or colleges/learning providers at the start and end of the school day.

Lower distances up to 3 miles are measured by the shortest available walking route. Upper distances are measured by the shortest available driving route.

Travel assistance will be provided in a safe and cost effective manner, where appropriate taking account of the child's specific needs and with regard to the best use of the Council's resources from a range of options set out below:

- a) **Bus or Rail Pass** - This is a free pass for the use on public transport and is the most common form of travel assistance provided. Parents/carers may need to accompany primary age children to school, but travel assistance for parents accompanying entitled children will only be considered on a discretionary basis taking into account significant and exceptional circumstances. Secondary age pupils are usually expected to travel independently.
- b) **Transport Vehicles** - The provision of a vehicle to transport a child or young person to and from school. Vehicles and drivers are provided by a suitably qualified registered, commercial provider working to contractual standards set out by Portsmouth City Council. Where necessary passenger assistants are employed and trained by Portsmouth City Council to look after the welfare of pupils travelling on school transport. A Passenger Assistant will be provided for a primary age pupil travelling by taxi if the parent/carer is unable to accompany the child. Secondary age children may be provided with a Passenger Assistant if requested by the Head Teacher.

Whenever possible, children and young people will travel together in mini-buses. These will be specially adapted to meet the needs of those children or young people travelling on them. Each route will be planned on the basis of school start and finish times and the shortest possible route for all children or young people travelling on a particular vehicle.

- c) **Personal Transport Budget** - Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan can request a Personal Transport Budget. This can be paid as a direct payment. Families should discuss this option with their Assessment Co-ordinator or SEND Adviser at the pupil or young person's Annual Review. More details can be found in Portsmouth City Council's Local Offer.

- d) **Access to Independent Travel Training** - Support will be offered alongside a planned programme to enable the child or young person to travel independently over a period time.
- e) **Car Mileage Allowance or Cycle Allowance** - A mileage allowance of 20p per mile will be payable. Parents/carers should check their car insurance policy, as it may be invalidated if they do not inform their insurance company. Parents must submit their claim using the appropriate form within 4 weeks after the start of the following term; otherwise the claim cannot be accepted for payment.

### **3. Parental Preference**

Assessment for travel assistance will be determined once a school place has been allocated by the Local Authority. If as a result of parental preference, a child is not attending their designated catchment or nearer school, or they are not attending one of the three nearest secondary schools (for families meeting the low income criteria) or nearest qualifying special school, they will not normally be entitled to assistance with transport to school, except in exceptional circumstances.

### **4. Commissioned Placements**

When a school commissions a place for a student in an alternative provision, the student will have their transport assessed by measuring the distance between the student's home address and the commissioned placement. If the distance between the home and the commissioned placement is over the statutory walking distance, transport will be arranged by the local authority and funded by the school or the commissioner of the place.

If the walking distance between the student's home and the commissioned placement is less than the statutory walking distance, transport will not normally be provided, except in exceptional circumstances or the school or the commissioner of the placement agrees to fund the transport.

### **5. 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. Pupils who change their home address will have their eligibility reassessed based on the new address. Where a pupil has been entitled to a bus pass the old bus pass must be returned to the Access and Entitlement Officer before a new bus pass can be issued.

### **6. Journey Times**

Transport will be arranged so as to be non-stressful. In normal circumstances, the maximum journey time should be no longer than 45 minutes for primary aged pupils and 75 minutes for secondary aged pupils. Exceptions may apply for operational reasons, although individual needs will be assessed. Longer journeys may be necessary for pupils attending special educational needs schools outside of Portsmouth.

Children 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 are responsible for the safety of their child until they board and after they exit the vehicle. If the parent/carer is not at the drop off point to meet their child, he/she will be placed into the care of the Duty Social Worker at Children's Social Care. The parent/carer may be responsible for any additional expenditure incurred. 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.

Where the distance between a pick-up or drop-off point and home or school 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.

## **6. Unacceptable Behaviour**

The City Council will reserve the right to review, with parents/carers, the provision of transport on a contract vehicle, where a pupil's behaviour is such that it may threaten the safety of the pupils, driver and passenger assistants.

When parents are advised, in writing, of their entitlement to transport, their attention is drawn to the section "Behaviour on the Vehicle" in the Educational Authority's Guide for Parents and Carers. They are advised that if their child misbehaves, they will receive a letter from the Integrated Transport Unit, which will warn that a suspension of transport for up to two weeks will apply if the behaviour does not improve. Should a suspension be considered necessary, parents will be responsible for transporting their child to school during this period. Transport is then re-instated. If the child's behaviour does not improve, an officer of the Local Authority will discuss with parents the possible withdrawal of transport and the alternative arrangements which may need to be made. A public bus pass or mileage expenses may be offered.

## **7. Attendance**

Where attendance at school or college/6th form//learning providers is irregular the Local Authority has the right to review transport assistance and withdraw it if attendance remains unacceptable.

## **8. School Re-organisation (by the City Council)**

Other than by exceptional decision, the normal entitlement policy will apply to the children of families where closure or reorganisation takes place.

## **9. Change of School Day**

Provided that governing bodies of Local Authority maintained schools have followed the procedures in statute and national guidance the City Council will seek to rearrange transport accordingly. However, if additional costs are involved, the City Council reserves the right to make arrangements for all or part of those costs to be charged to the school concerned.

## **10. Health and Safety**

Health and safety information provided by parents and head teachers is gathered as part of the application process. This is then assessed and relevant information will be provided to passenger assistants.

## **11. Appeals**

Parents have a right to appeal the decisions made by Portsmouth City Council officers when assessing Home to School Transport applications. The appeals process is outlined in Home to School Travel Appeal process detailed at Appendix A.

## **12. Timescales.**

Where a delay occurs in providing transport which is over and above the normal operational timescale for doing so, and the application for transport has been submitted with the permitted timescales, (including all supporting evidence) reimbursement may be made to cover expenses incurred (upon production of evidence of expenditure) from the date from which transport would otherwise have been provided dependent on authorisation from the Head Teacher of the pupil's school. Such reimbursement will be calculated using the most cost effective means of transport.

## **13. Assessment Errors**

Where assistance is found to have been granted in error, notice of one full term will normally be given that assistance will be withdrawn to allow families to make other arrangements.

Where entitlement has been denied in error, transport will be arranged as soon as possible and consideration will be given to reimbursing parents retrospectively, with a time limit of the start of the academic year in which the error was discovered.

## **14. Lost and Stolen Bus Passes**

Where a bus pass is lost there will be an administration charge made by the bus company to the parent/carer for a replacement. Stolen bus passes will not incur an administration charge if evidence in the form of a police crime number is provided.

## **15. Complaints**

Portsmouth City Council takes complaints seriously and if needed the complaints procedure can be found at Portsmouth City Council [www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk). In the first instance complaints should be put in writing to Commissioning Manager, Child Support Services and Education Directorate, Civic Offices Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2EA.

## **16. 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](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/learning).



## APPENDIX A

### HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT APPEAL PROCESS

**Stage 1** - The Access and Entitlement Officer assesses the application for Home to School 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 prepares and presents the case on behalf of Portsmouth City Council to the Inclusion Transport Panel. Parent/carers or their representatives are invited to attend and present their case.

Parents/carers/young people receive written notification of the outcome of the Inclusion Transport Panel within 7 working days from the date of the Inclusion Transport Panel and if their application is declined the parent/carer/young person may:



Appeal the decision, in writing to the Director of Children's Services and Education (within 20 working days)



**Stage 3** - The Director of Children's Services and Education reviews the case and parents/carers/young people are informed of the decision in writing, within 40 working days.

The Director of Children's Services and Education decision letter gives details of how to escalate a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.