

POST-16 TRANSPORT POLICY

2021/22 Academic Year



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

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Legislation

Plymouth City Council has a duty to provide transport for children and young people who are eligible in accordance with Section 509 of the Education Act 1996, as inserted by Section 57 of Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Who is entitled to assistance with transport?

Plymouth City Council has interpreted its duty to provide transport as set out below.

Assistance will be given to students resident in Plymouth or deemed to be the responsibility of Plymouth City Council.

Who qualifies?

Assistance will be given to students who are over compulsory school age and

- are under the age of 19 on 1 September 2021 or who commenced their current course before they were aged 19 and are continuing on the same course, and
- are registered at a school or college and attending a full time course for at least 450 hours per academic year, over three terms (approximately 12 hours per week) and
- are studying a further education course and
- have a special educational need or other medical condition which would prevent them walking or travelling on public transport.

If a young person is seeking to engage with an apprenticeship or traineeship, they should talk to the learning provider who will be able to inform them of any transport assistance that may be available. Employers and learning providers should take into account a young person's transport arrangements when planning any job training, particularly outside of normal working hours. Please also see advice in Access to Work section below.

Preferred Setting

Assistance will be provided for a student to attend their nearest school or college offering the chosen course of study within the City of Plymouth Boundary.

Assistance will be provided for a student to attend an educational setting outside Plymouth if this is the nearest setting offering the chosen course of study.

*Students who do not qualify for assistance

Students who commence a course after their 19th birthday will not qualify for assistance under this policy – please see the Post-19 Transport policy.

How do I apply for transport?

All applications for transport under this policy must be made on an annual basis using the post-16 Transport Application Form and submitted to the Transport Team. Please click on this link to make an application <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/schoolsandeducation/schooltransport/specialormedicalneeds>

Provision of transport

Students will be assessed according to need, in consultation with appropriate professionals.

Students who are unable to use public transport due to their special or other medical needs will be provided with appropriate transport to meet their needs.

Students who are assessed as being able to travel independently using public transport will not receive any additional assistance.

Do I have to pay towards transport?

The parent/carer/student will be required to make a contribution towards to cost of transport. This is currently £502 per year if paid in 10 equal instalment by direct debit or standing order; the cost will be reduced by 10% to £451.80 if paid in 1 instalment at the start of the academic year. This charge will increase by RPI on an annual basis.

Can I choose the type of transport that is provided?

Plymouth City Council will determine the means of transport between home and school, however, you can request an allowance to take your child to/from school. Allocated transport may Plymouth City Council vehicles, contracted minibuses or taxis, or rail services and also reimbursement to parents/carers for a petrol allowance or personal payment plan.

Students attending a residential school whose placement is funded by the Education Funding Agency will be provided with one return journey at the start and end of each half term or the start and end of each week depending on the commissioned boarding arrangements.

Transport will be provided for one return journey from home to the setting at the start and end of the official setting day (e.g. 9am - 4pm) during standard academic terms. Transport is not provided to meet a learner's individual timetable, including clubs or extra-curricular activities.

Where a learner is attending a split site course, for example one day in the main educational setting and another at an alternative campus, transport will be provided to the main qualifying campus only.

Can I use my own transport?

Yes you can, if the student is entitled to transport. We pay 45p per mile for the round trip eg leaving your home address to take the student to College and for you to return to your home address in the morning and the same journey again in the afternoon to collect the student from College.

Except in very exceptional cases the rate will be 45p per mile and this will be increased on an annual basis by RPI but will not exceed HMRC limits.

If you take this option, you will not have to pay the post-16 charge of £502.00

Will I get collected from home?

Plymouth City Council uses pick up and drop off points and students will be collected at a suitable pick-up point determined by the Transport team. This will be as near to their home as is reasonably possible or the home address if the student is unable to safely walk the distance to the pick-up point, accompanied as necessary. Some students, however, may have to walk a reasonable distance to and from home to meet their transport. Parents/carers are responsible for their children's safety in

getting to and from the transport. They are also responsible for their children while they are waiting for transport and when they leave the transport at the end of the day.

Journey times

Where possible journey times on contracted vehicles will be a maximum of 75 minutes, except in exceptional circumstances eg travel to an out of authority setting.

Seatbelts

It is Plymouth City Council's policy that on all contracted vehicles, provision will be made for each passenger to have his/her own seat and for seatbelts to be fitted. All passengers must wear seatbelts. Any child or young person who refuses to wear a seatbelt will not be allowed to travel.

Passenger Assistants

Passenger Assistants will be provided on transport in individual cases where they are, in Plymouth City Council's view, necessary to meet a learner's individual needs. The role of a Passenger Assistant will be to provide general supervision and ensure a safe and comfortable journey to and from the setting.

Passenger Assistants will only be provided to meet more complex individual needs such as medical or health requirements where there is supporting professional evidence that such support is necessary to ensure a child's safe journey to and from the setting.

Using wheelchairs as a seat in the vehicle

A risk assessment must be undertaken by a Transport Officer before any wheelchair can be used as a seat in the vehicle. This is to ensure that the wheelchair is of a type that is suitable for transportation and that the correct restraints are used in the vehicle. A 'passport' (a coloured plastic disc) will be fitted to the wheelchair to indicate that the risk assessment has been carried out. A wheelchair not displaying the 'passport' will not be carried and it will be the parents' responsibility to arrange their own transport until the risk assessment has been completed.

In exceptional cases, for example if the disc has become detached, it may be possible to arrange for a wheelchair to be carried without the 'passport' subject to agreement by the Principal Transport & Allowances Officer.

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that the Transport Team is notified at least ten working days in advance of a student changing their wheelchair.

Should it be necessary for specialised restraints/equipment to be obtained before the wheelchair can be carried then parents will be responsible for making their own transport arrangements until such time as the restraints are available. A transport allowance may be payable if this takes longer than ten working days.

A headrest must be provided if a student is travelling in their wheelchair. It is the parent's responsibility to arrange provision of this through the wheelchair provider. Passenger Assistants will not be responsible for the fitting or removal of headrests.

Will I be able to take my other equipment?

Where other equipment needs to be transported, eg oxygen cylinders, suction machines etc, this may require adaptations to the vehicle in order that it can be transported safely. Whilst the adaptation is being made it is the parents' responsibility to make their own transport arrangements.

Protection of Children

The Local Authority undertakes an enhanced DBS check on all drivers and passenger assistants on contracted vehicles. All drivers and passenger assistants are issued with identity badges, which should be worn at all times whilst on contract.

All passenger assistants receive appropriate training to help them protect children and young people, and to help them identify any concerns as they arise.

If I don't qualify for assisted travel can I pay for a concessionary seat?

Where spare seats are available on school transport vehicles, students who are not entitled to assisted transport may be allowed to travel on the pre-payment of a fee determined by PCC.

*Please note this facility is not available to students who are Post 19.

Parents are advised that should a spare seat be required for a new student who qualifies for assisted travel or because of a change to the size of vehicle being used then the facility will be withdrawn. Four weeks' notice will be given should it be necessary to withdraw the facility.

Where concessionary riders are displaced, the displacement should be in the order of:

- a) those not attending the nearest educational establishment;
- b) those nearest to their educational establishment;
- c) those with siblings on the vehicle who are travellers

In cases where the concession is withdrawn refunds will be made on a pro rata basis.

Fee for a concessionary seat

The fee for a vacant seat will be determined on a case by case basis by dividing the cost of the transport by the number of pupils on the vehicle.

Transport Granted in Error

Where transport has been granted in error it will be withdrawn. Six weeks' notice will be given to parents.

Behaviour and Damage on Transport

Behaviour

Parents, carers, schools, transport contractors and Plymouth City Council all want to know about the behaviour of students whilst on transport.

Drivers and passenger assistants are asked to liaise with schools and the Transport Officers where there are behavioural problems, but are instructed never to evict a student from the vehicle anywhere on a route other than at the normal setting down point.

If problems are such that the safety of other passengers, the driver or passenger assistant is endangered, transport will be withdrawn. It will then be the parent's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements to ensure their child's attendance at the establishment.

Damage

Plymouth City Council requires contractors to indemnify the Council against all damage, however caused.

Contractors may seek recompense from parents where responsibility for damage rests with their child(ren).

Independent Travel Training

The Local Authority currently provides an Independent Travel Trainer who can help a child or young person to learn to travel independently. Referrals to the scheme are made through the school or college. The criteria for travel training are as follows:

- Age 14 to 19
- Living in Plymouth
- In full time education
- Has an EHC Plan
- Currently travelling on transport arranged via the PCC Transport Team

What do I do if I don't agree with a decision?

The appeals procedure exists to consider representations from parents relating to the implementation of School Transport policy, but not policy issues.

The appeal procedure is a two stage process consisting of a review and an appeal

Reviews

- A request for a review must be submitted within 20 working days of the date of the refusal letter.
- The written request should detail why the parent believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family exceptional circumstances the parent believes should be considered to warrant a departure from the policy.
- Within 20 working days of receipt of the parent's written request a Senior Transport Officer will review the original decision and send the parent a written notification of the outcome of their review, this will include the decision reached; how the review was conducted; information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process; what factors were considered and the rationale for the decision reached. If the review is refused the letter will also confirm how to appeal against the decision.

Appeals

- A parent has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's review decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to the appeal.
- Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents request an independent appeal panel of 3 Senior Officers (independent of the original decision) will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case.
- Within 5 working days of the appeal panel hearing a written notification of the outcome of their appeal will be sent to the parent; this will include the decision reached; how the appeal

was conducted; it will confirm if other departments and/or agencies were consulted as part of the process; what information were considered; and the rationale for the decision reached.

- If the appeal is refused, the letter will also confirm the parent's right to put the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman

If an appeal is upheld then travel costs may be reimbursed from the date of the original application to the date that transport provision is made. This will be reimbursed at the cheapest rate.

What other support is available?

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:

- in care
- care leavers
- in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
- in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

2. Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2020 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or the local authority

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

Young Parents / Care to Learn

For young parents under the age of 20, Care to Learn can help pay for childcare and related travel costs of up to £160 per child per week. For more information please visit: www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim

Access to Work

Young people who have a disability or health condition (physical or mental) that makes it hard to get to and from work (including apprenticeships and traineeships) may also be eligible for support through Access to Work. Further information can be found via: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Other Transport Arrangements - Colleges/Schools

City College Plymouth offer a half hourly shuttle bus service to and from the city centre and the college main sites. Students can use the bus free of charge with their college ID card. This service is a low floor disabled access vehicle. Contact the college for more details and a bus timetable.

Plymouth College of Art offer some assistance with travel costs, contact the college for more details.

Secondary Schools – For assistance with specific school organised bus services, please contact the individual schools direct.

Privacy Notice - Being transparent and providing accessible information to individuals about how we use personal information is a key element of the Data Protection Act.

The full policy and notice is available on the Plymouth City Council website at:

www.plymouth.gov.uk/aboutwebsite/privacypolicy

If you wish to make a complaint, compliment or give the Local Authority your feedback, please use the following link:

[www.plymouth.gov.uk/selfservice/feedbackandcomplaints/makegeneralcomplaintcomplimentorgiveusourfeedback](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/selfservice/feedbackandcomplaints/makegeneralcomplaintcomplimentorgiveusyourfeedback)

Amendments to this policy

Plymouth City Council will monitor what is set out within this transport policy and continue to monitor its progress through the year. In line with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance, Plymouth City Council reserves the right to amend and republish this transport policy statement at any point during the year in response to complaints or to a direction by the Secretary of State.