



Bracknell Forest Council

Post 16 Education Transport Policy

Academic Year 2026 – 2027

Introduction

There is no legal duty to provide free or subsidised transport, referred to in this policy as “travel assistance”, to post-16 students. This policy outlines that the local authority, if applicable, will assess a young person’s needs in order to meet their travel assistance. This may include young people including those from low-income families and those with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The Department for Education ‘Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training’, January 2019 advises that local authorities should not differentiate between providers or institutions in the arrangements it provides to support students in facilitating their attendance in education or training. In preparing this Policy, Bracknell Forest Council (‘the Authority’) is mindful of the requirements under the Education and Skills Act 2008, which are as follows:

All young people carrying on their education post-16 must re-apply for travel support each academic year.

This policy supersedes all previous policies and applies only to the academic year 2026/27. Post-16 refers to learners of sixth form age and those with SEND up to the age of 25.



Legal and policy framework

The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010. These Acts require that:

1. A local authority shall prepare for each academic year a transport policy statement.
2. The statement shall specify the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the authority consider it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age, receiving education or training at:
 - (a) A school
 - (b) A college of further education
 - (c) A local authority maintained or assisted institution providing further education
 - (d) An establishment supported by the Education Funding Agency
 - (e) A learning provider funded by the local authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to a positive outcome.
3. This requires the local authority to have regard to the need to include sufficient information in their transport statement and the need to publish the statement in good time, so that young people and their parents are able to take account of these matters when choosing an establishment.
4. The statement will provide the details of the financial support that the local authority considers necessary to facilitate access to education for those learners who are eligible for transport assistance.
5. The statement shall also provide information about the travel provision put in place for young adult learners aged 19+ and those aged 19 – 25 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

Key Bracknell Forest Council contact details:

Education Transport Team	The Special Educational Needs (SEND) Team
Time Square Market Street Bracknell RG12 1JD Tel: 01344 352002 Email: education.transport@bracknell-forest.gov.uk	Time Square Market Street Bracknell RG12 1JD Tel: 01344 354039 Email: Sen.education@bracknell-forest.gov.uk



1 Students of sixth-form age

This is defined as being a person receiving education or training at an establishment and he/she is over compulsory school age but is under the age of 19 or has begun a particular course at the establishment before attaining the age of 19 and continues to attend that course or is over the age of 16 and out of cohort, repeating year 11. This definition also applies to a young person with an EHC plan up to age 25, if they are continuing a course started before their 19th birthday.

1.1 Travel Assistance Support Criteria

- There is no legal requirement for Local authorities to provide travel assistance beyond the completion of Year 11. The Council will only consider providing support and assistance in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, parents and carers should ensure that they are aware of the cost of transport and take this into account when making choices for their young person's post 16 education.
- The student must reside within the administrative boundary of Bracknell Forest and be in full time (16 hours a week minimum) further education at one of the following:
- A school or academy; a further education institution; a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education; a learning provider, funded by the local authority, which leads to a positive outcome (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers).
- Students may receive appropriate support providing the distance between their home address and place of study is more than 3 miles. The distance between a student's home (i.e. a single permanent residence) and place of study will be measured by the shortest available safe walking route.
- Students who live within 3 miles of their nearest* suitable school, college or nearest training provider, offering an appropriate level of study, will not normally receive support with transport unless there are exceptional circumstances which mean the student is unable to travel independently or with assistance from a parent, guardian or carer. Consideration will be given by the Council to the nature of a student's SEND on a case-by-case basis. Wherever possible, independent travel will be encouraged for all students including those with SEND.

**The nearest suitable learning provider is the closest school or college to the home address able to offer a suitable level of study in accordance with the young person's educational needs. Normally account is not taken of preferred courses or specialist courses, which are not available at the nearest educational setting. If parents choose to send their young person to a school or college (or the young person chooses this themselves) which is not the nearest suitable setting, as described above, assistance with travel arrangements will not be provided by the Council.*

- Support may be provided for a student of a family on low income in the following circumstances:
 - i. Free school meals as defined in the Council's free school meals eligibility, please use this link to check [Free school meals | Bracknell Forest Council](#) or
 - ii. The parent with whom they live is entitled to the maximum Working Tax Credit /Universal Credit (as appropriate).

Those students who are over 19 years and receive benefits, in their own right, will be assessed as an individual on the grounds of low income.

- iii. The Council must be notified in writing of a change in the home address so that travel eligibility can be re-assessed.

1.2 Contribution to travel costs

The principles in which the policy is founded remain broadly the same as in previous years and are set out below, but include the requirement for eligible students to contribute towards their transport costs:

- The arrangements under this policy are that all students who receive transport assistance contribute £866 per annum towards the costs of their transport.
- Where a student qualifies on the grounds of low income then the contribution by the student will be 50% (£433 per annum).
- This will apply to all students whether attending mainstream or special/specialist post-16 education provision, independent schools or Further Education colleges and other suitable training establishments.
- Support for the provision of transport will be considered for students of sixth form age i.e., a student who is over compulsory school age, but below 19, or in exceptional circumstances a student who has begun a particular course of education or training before they reached 19 and continues to attend that course. Please note that where the student becomes 19 years of age during their course, transport assistance will cease at the end of the academic year in which their 19th birthday falls.
- The Council does not provide support for transport assistance for part-time courses or non state funded education.
- Where a school/college or parent/guardian/carer have been making their own transport arrangements, the Council will not agree to pay these costs retrospectively.

1.3 Apprenticeships and traineeships

Where a student considers that they may be eligible for travel assistance and they wish this to apply to either an apprenticeship or to a traineeship, they should submit an on-line application as for all other learners. The above contribution to travel costs will also apply.

1.4 Type of support/mode of travel offered for students

The type of support/mode of travel will depend on the individual circumstances of the student, which will be assessed by the Council.

If a student is unable to travel unaccompanied on either public transport or on transport commissioned by the education establishment or training provider, parents/guardians or carers of students will be offered a mileage allowance.

The amount of the mileage allowance will reflect a reduction based on the contribution (see above "Contribution to travel costs").

Where a student is in receipt of a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or has received a bursary from the 16-19 Bursary Fund, (please see 1.8), this may be used to transport the student to and from school, Further Education College or apprenticeship/traineeship placement.

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to provide contracted transport to accommodate a student's journey to and from school or college.

Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

The BFC Education Transport service will actively promote safeguarding and align with best practice in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls (VAWG). This includes ensuring that all transport providers, drivers, passenger assistants, and relevant staff receive appropriate safeguarding training that recognises gender-based risks, respectful behaviour, and early identification of inappropriate conduct or harassment.

Risk assessments will consider factors such as lone travel, seating arrangements, supervision levels, and safe pick up and drop off points, with particular attention to the safety and dignity of girls and other vulnerable children. Clear reporting mechanisms will be in place and communicated to pupils and families and the public, enabling concerns to be raised confidentially and acted upon promptly. The policy promotes a culture of zero tolerance to harassment, abuse, or discrimination, and works in partnership with schools, families, the public, and local safeguarding agencies to ensure that all children and young people experience safe, respectful, and supportive journeys to and from school.

1.5 Public Bus and Rail Services

Where a student is deemed eligible to support and their journey can reasonably be accommodated using existing public bus or rail, then the student will be expected to pay the appropriate contribution (see above “Contribution to travel costs”).

1.6 Students with SEND

The Council wishes to encourage, enable, and assist the participation of young people with special educational needs and disabilities in education and training. Travel training will be considered for students as part of the phase transfer stage from compulsory to post-16 education and during the annual review process.

Students with an EHC plan will be assessed on their transport eligibility by the Council at the phase transfer stage, i.e. when they move from compulsory education to post-16 education travel arrangements may then be provided to address the needs of eligible students.

Decisions/recommendations will be made in accordance with the legal framework and statutory guidance for post-16 transport provision. Suitable travel arrangements will then be provided to address the needs of eligible students.

1.7 Out of Borough Education

This policy applies where the educational needs of a student with SEND cannot be addressed within Bracknell Borough and a suitable out of borough establishment is identified by the Council.

Students attending an alternative school/college/education provider through personal preference or choice will not receive assistance with travel arrangements.

Attendance at out of borough education establishments may include weekly or termly boarding and hence the travel arrangements for each student will vary accordingly. In such cases, the scheduling of transport will be agreed with the school, Further Education college or training provider, in conjunction with the parents/guardians/carers or young person.

Where a young person is placed outside the Bracknell Forest area, including those who are looked after, responsibility for arranging and funding travel assistance will be determined in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance. Transport arrangements are made by the host local authority, with costs recovered from the placing authority where appropriate.

1.8 The 16 - 19 Bursary Fund

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-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 two 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. A discretionary bursary - to be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August in the academic year of the policy, or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August in the academic year of the policy and have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August in the academic year of the policy 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/ search for post 16 bursaries.

1.9 Applying for post-16 travel support (Students of sixth-form age)

All requests for travel arrangements must be made by completing the online application form which is available at <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-transport-support>. Applications must be made annually and will be reviewed to assess whether travel arrangements are still required. In cases where the Council considers that the criteria have not been met and travel assistance will not be provided, an appeal against this decision can be made through the published appeals process.

If the need for travel assistance indicates that a vehicle is required, the Education Transport Team will first offer a mileage allowance to the appropriate educational establishment subject to payment of the appropriate contribution (see above).

It is unlikely that the transport provided will be the same as when the learner attended school, and every encouragement will be made towards independent travel by public transport. However, should there be a need for additional support on the grounds of the student's SEND, this will be considered.

Students travelling to a place of further education, where the Council already provides transport, may be offered a seat in that vehicle. However, students should be aware that the transport will only operate at the times, arranged by the Council for existing students and no changes or additional transport will be provided for post-16 students.



2 Adult learners (i.e. those aged 19 or over)

Please note that this section only applies to young adults who are in education or training and who have an Education, Health and Care plan.

Where a young person started a course after their 19th birthday at a local authority maintained or assisted further or higher education institution, or institutions within the further education sector, arrangements may be made for travel provision to facilitate a young person's attendance if the Council considers these to be necessary. This also applies to young people with an EHC plan.

Please note that this is intended to ensure that those with the most severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with no other means of transportation, are able to undertake further education and training after their 19th birthday, to help them move towards more independent living.

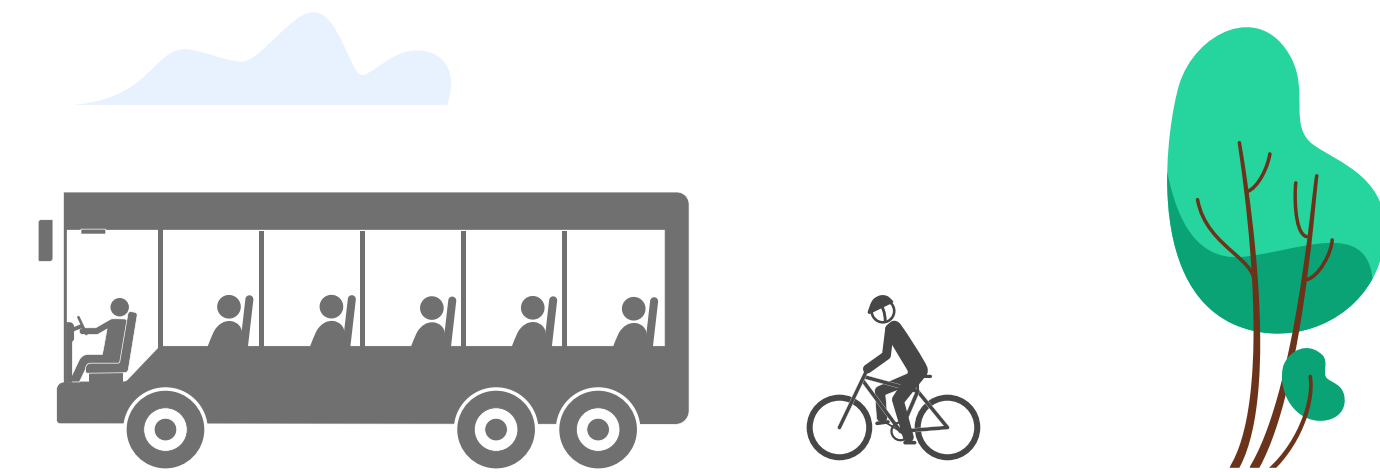
Free transport will be provided to a young adult learner (not being a person of sixth form age), where the Council has secured and named a setting in an EHC plan which provides both the provision of education or training and the provision of boarding accommodation. This applies to an adult learner aged under 25, subject to an EHC plan and where it is considered necessary to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

Free transport assistance may be provided where an adult learner was receiving education or training at an establishment maintained or assisted by the Authority and providing Further Education, or at a College of Further Education, and the Council considered that:

- a. the person's attendance on that course was reasonably necessary; and
- b. it was necessary for the Council to provide transport to facilitate that person's attendance on the course.

In deciding whether it is necessary for the Council to provide free transport assistance for an adult learner, the Council would amongst other things, have regard to:

- the learner's age, ability and aptitude
- any SEND the person may have
- the locations and times at which the education or training is provided
- the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which the learner could reasonably be expected to take.



For the purposes of deciding whether to provide free transport the Council would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector. **The Council expects to see evidence of the learner making progress, but each case will be considered on its own merits.**

2.1 Applying for post-16 travel support (Adult learners)

All requests for travel arrangements must be made by completing the online application form which is available at <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-transport-support>. Applications must be made annually and will be reviewed to assess whether travel arrangements are still required. In cases, where the Authority considers that the criteria have not been met and travel assistance will not be provided, an appeal against this decision can be made through the published appeals process.



Useful contacts

Berkshire College of Agriculture

The college operates their own bus service to the college and students can purchase passes directly from the college.

Tel: 01628 827482

Email: enquiries@bca.ac.uk

Bracknell and Wokingham College

Further Education College offering a range of full and part time courses.

Tel: 0845 330 3343

Email: study@bracknell.ac.uk

Farnborough College of Technology

Further Education College offering a range of full and part time courses.

Tel: 0845 330 3343

Email: info@fam-ct.ac.uk

Farnborough 6th Form College

6th Form College covering a wide range of full time courses.

Tel: 01252 688200

Email: admin@farnborough.ac.uk

Reading College (Activate Learning)

Further Education College covering a wide range of full time courses.

Tel: 0800 6126008

Website: [Reading College \(activatelearning.ac.uk\)](http://Reading College (activatelearning.ac.uk))

R-Bus

The R-Bus is a bus service for adults with learning disabilities and their carers, who are resident in the Bracknell Forest area. Although it has limited capacity, transport may be available to BWC Bracknell campus.

The cost of each trip is £2.20

Tel: 01344 352095

Email: rbus@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Disabled persons Bus pass:

www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport/travel-and-public-transport/disabled-persons-bus-pass

3 Young parents/Care to Learn

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under 19 Bus Only Ticket, or those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19 – 25 card. For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim>

4 Appeal procedures

Parents/guardians/carers or a young person are entitled to challenge the decision of the Council to refuse to provide assistance with transport as set out in this policy or when the parents/guardians/carers or young person consider that the travel arrangements, agreed by the Council, are unsuitable.

A decision may be challenged on the following grounds only:

- eligibility
- distance measurement; and/or
- safety of the route
- transport arrangements offered

Stage 1 – Review of decision

You have 20 working days from the receipt of the transport decision to make a request, asking for a review of the original decision.

The request should detail why the decision should be reviewed and give personal and/or family circumstances, which should be considered during the appeal process.

An Officer from the Council will review the original decision and will send you a letter, detailing the outcome of the review within 20 working days of the receipt of the written request.

This will set out the following information:

- the nature of the decision reached
- how the review was concluded
- information about other departments and/or agencies consulted as part of the process
- what factors were considered
- the rationale for the decision reached
- Information about escalation to Stage 2, if appropriate

How to make a Stage 1 appeal

Please provide us with the following information and then email your request to:

education.transport-appeals@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Confirmation that you are the legal parent or guardian of the child and please provide the date you received our transport notification

- Child's first name and family name
- Child's date of birth
- Your full name and address
- Your email address
- Your phone/mobile number
- Reasons for the appeal (i.e. eligibility, distance, route safety or transport arrangements) and your reasons for challenging the Authority's decision.

Stage 2 - Appeal

You will have 20 working days from the receipt of the Council's decision to make a request to escalate the matter to appeal.

An independent appeal panel made up of 5 members of the Council will be convened to consider the appeal within 40 working days.

The independent appeal panel will consist of:

- 3 Borough councillors
- A Senior Officer
- A democratic services officer (acting as clerk)

No member of the appeal panel will have been involved in the original decision to decline transport assistance. This panel will consider verbal and written representations from parent/guardian/young person, involved in the request.

You will be invited to attend the hearing to present your case.

The Officer involved in the review of the decision at Stage 1 may also be invited to attend.

You will receive a letter, detailing the outcome of the appeal hearing, which will set out the following information:

- the nature of the decision reached
- how the review was concluded
- information about other departments and/or agencies consulted as part of the process
- what factors were considered
- the rationale for the decision reached
- information about escalation to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

How to make a Stage 2 Appeal

Please send your written request, clearly marked POST 16 TRANSPORT APPEAL, to:

By email: committee@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

By post: Democratic Services, Bracknell Forest Council, Time Square, Bracknell, RG12 1JD

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, you have a right of complaint to the LGSCO on the grounds that there was a failure on the part of the Authority to comply with procedural rules or there was an irregularity in the way the appeal was handled.

The LGSCO can be contacted at:

www.lgo.org.uk



If you need this document in an alternative format or language or you require a reasonable adjustment, please call 01344 352000 or email: customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.