



Post-16 Transport to Education and Training

Transport Policy statement for Students of Sixth Form age (16-18) and extended access to Students aged 19 to 25 who have SEN (Special Educational Needs) & Disabilities for 2025/26.

1. Introduction

Under the Raising the Participation Age agenda, from September 2014, Students have been required to be in education, or training until their 18th birthday. This could involve mixing full-time work with study, following an apprenticeship, continuing full-time in school or college, or combining part-time training with volunteering. However, there is no change to compulsory school age and no extension to the entitlement to free transport beyond this (end of Year 11).

Walsall Council is required by statute to set out what travel assistance is available from the Council and from other bodies to help young people (Students) aged 16-18 (and older in some cases) to attend their school, further education college or training provider. In compiling this Policy, the Council has had regard to the 'Post-16 transport and travel assistance to education and training' January 2019 statutory guidance which has been issued to local authorities by the Department for Education.

There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school or college transport once a student is over 16 years and beyond statutory school age. Walsall Council no longer provides actual transport for post-16 students (other than in exceptional circumstances) and therefore the responsibility for providing or securing appropriate transport arrangements rests with the student and or their parents/carers.

Post-16 students with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may be entitled to travel assistance. This is no longer free of charge. Travel assistance may also be extended above the age of 19 to enable the student to make further progress each year and for Students who start their course after the age of 19.

Students aged 16-18 at the start of the academic year (1 September), and living within the West Midlands metropolitan area, are eligible for discounted travel tickets. Walsall Council makes payments each year to TfWM (Transport for West Midlands), the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority, so that concessionary fares are available for Students. Information is provided in this Policy below about the range of concessionary fares and other sources of help that are available to Students.

All applications must be renewed and reassessed annually and will not be carried over from one academic year to the next.

This policy statement has been updated in 2025 to reflect changes that apply for the academic year 2025/26.

2. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

There is no special transport provision for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) pupils and it is expected that all SEND students with a statement or EHCP make their own travel arrangements like any other Student. However, if they are unable to do this for any reason Walsall Council may be able to assist. Such assistance is discretionary and is determined in accordance with the criteria set out in this document.

Students aged 16 to 18

SEND Students who are aged 16 or over and who are unable to access or use public transport may be able to apply to Walsall Council for travel assistance to assist them in their education and training.

Students who are aged 16 or over with an EHCP who are unable to use public transport and who have no other assistance available to them from their parents/carers may be entitled to help with travel assistance to ensure they are able to participate in education or training.

You can apply to Walsall Council for travel assistance in your own right or your family/carers can apply on your behalf. Anyone who wishes to apply for travel assistance from Walsall Council will need to complete an application form each year, even if they have already received any form of travel assistance during the previous academic year.

The Council will assess the individual circumstances of each Student and their need for travel assistance. We will do this in consultation with you, as the Student, your parents/carers, and your school, college, or training provider. This assessment will take account of the type, duration, and location of the chosen course as well as the nature of each young person's unique special educational needs, disability or learning difficulty.

In most cases, we will offer a Student the opportunity to take part in an independent travel training programme. More information on Independent Travel Training can be seen in Walsall's Local Offer pages.

[Welcome to Walsall's SEND Local Offer | Send](#)

Other travel options for Students who are eligible for travel assistance include a personal transport budget; a travel pass; use of shared transport such as a minibus or, in exceptional circumstances, a taxi, usually shared, with or without a designated Passenger Assistant.

Contributions to the Cost

Whatever the option, low-income students must pay £300 a year towards the cost. Those who do not meet the low-income criteria must pay £600 a year towards the cost. These contributions are fixed and can be paid by instalments.

College Specific Information

Students attending the colleges specified on page 3 should contact the college first before applying to the Council for transport assistance. The minimum attendance requirement for full time education is 15 hours per week.

Walsall College students who have an EHCP and no other means of travelling to the college can be assessed for Independent Travel Training or qualify for a personal transport budget. If travel assistance is provided, it will be available at the start and end of the school day and will not support reduced timetable attendance.

South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston) provides its own travel service, which students with an EHCP must arrange directly with the college. However, students enrolled in the Futures programme may contact the SEN Transport Team to apply for supported travel assistance.

Wolverhampton College students who have an EHCP and no other means of travelling to the college can be assessed for Independent Travel Training or qualify for a personal transport budget. If travel assistance is provided, it will be available at the start and end of the school day and will not support reduced timetables.

Students aged 19 or Over

Travel assistance may also be extended by Walsall Council above the age of 19 up to the age of 25, to enable eligible students to make further educational progress each year. This is only for any continuing course begun on or before the student's 19th birthday.

Students who start a new course after the age of 19 may also be eligible for travel assistance from Walsall Council. Students will only be eligible if they have an Education, Health, and Care Plan. Students no longer have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or a Section 139a assessment. You will need to provide evidence to show why you feel the Council should make the travel arrangements rather than yourself or your family/carers.

Alternatively, the Council may simply opt to pay all or part of any adult student's reasonable travelling expenses.

Where the Council agrees to provide travel assistance, it will do so in the most cost-effective way that takes account of the needs of the Student in question and which represents the best use of resources. The Student's eligibility for assistance with transport will be routinely reassessed by the Council each year.

Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this policy, the Council has a discretion to provide transport or travel assistance to any student aged 16 to 25 who resides in the borough, in exceptional circumstances, where there is no alternative means of addressing the travel needs of the Student in question. The Council will judge each case on its merits and the onus is on the applicant Student to explain why the exercise of the Council's discretion would be justified.

Any transport which the Council provides to Students aged 19 or over, who are attending a course which they started after their 19th birthday (including those with EHC (Education, Health and Care Plan) must be provided free of charge by the Council.

3. Concessionary fares and other tickets

Public Transport Assistance

Information is provided by TfWM. All prices quoted are correct as at May 2025.

The main bus operators in Walsall are National Express West Midlands, Arriva, and Diamond.

Walsall borough is in Zones 4 and 5 of the West Midlands rails networks.

Swift

This is a smart card for travel on public transport in the West Midlands. It provides cashless travel across the Network West Midlands area. You select how, when or where you pay for your travel, so whether you want to load it with Pay-As-You-Go credit or a season ticket. You just keep topping up the same card.

16-18 Photocards

The 16-18 photocard allows students in full-time education to purchase child-rate fares, child season tickets and monthly child direct debit tickets for the bus, metro, or train. These are about half the adult fare. To apply for the photocard you need to apply online at [Swift 16-18 Photocard | Transport for West Midlands \(tfwm.org.uk\)](https://www.tfwm.org.uk/16-18-photocard)

You can get your 16-18 photo card by obtaining a Unique Validation Code (UVC) from your school or college in September once you have enrolled. Without this UVC code you will not be able to apply for your 16-18 photo card.

The photo card is free, and the costs of a replacement is £7.50 for the whole academic year (September to July) and entitles you to buy:

- Child cash fares for travel to and from your school or college only; or
- Child season tickets, which are valid for one week, four weeks or a term that can be used at any time, seven days a week: or
- Monthly child direct debit tickets - the best-value option.

Child Term tickets and Direct Debit tickets can be bought and used without a valid 16-18 photocard during August and September. You need to show your photo card when you buy single fares, season tickets, and keep it with you while you are travelling.

Eligibility for a 16-18 Photocard

To be eligible you must have been born after August 31st, 2009, and live at a property where Council Tax is paid to Walsall Council.

It is also available in other authorities in the West Midlands including:

- Birmingham
- Coventry
- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Wolverhampton

Student Fares - the network student ticket

You can buy a discounted student ticket if you are over 18 and in full-time education. Or, if you are 16-18 and in full-time education and are not eligible for the 16-18 photo card, you can buy a student ticket.

Tickets are valid for one term and can be used as many times as you like. There are different options depending on how far you need to travel.

For example, a network student ticket that gives unlimited travel on regional buses, Rail Zones 1-5 (including Walsall) and the Metro will cost £185 for the summer term.

If you are travelling to and from a college outside the West Midlands, you can pay a supplement to cover any additional rail travel.

You will need proof you're in full-time education and 2 passport photos (or a jpg passport-style photo if you wish to buy online). You can:

- Buy online at [Local Bus Services | NX Bus West Midlands](#)
- Buy from selected National Express West Midlands Travel Card Agents and other bus operators.

There are some travel concessions that are only for Students with special educational needs, medical needs, or disabilities, as follows:

Disabled Person's Pass

You may qualify for a free travel pass if your disability is long-term or expected to last at least 12 months.

The pass is available to blind and other disabled students who are permanently resident in the West Midlands. A free permit is provided for use on bus, rail, and Midland Metro services. It is valid at the following times:

- Mondays to Fridays: 09:30 to end of daytime service.
- Weekends and Bank Holidays: Anytime.

There are also 'add-on' tickets that can be purchased to allow travel before 09:30.

More information from [network west midlands](#).

NX West Midlands Scholar's Ticket

These Scholar's tickets are not available for retail sale but may be provided for those Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, through the Council.

They are valid Monday to Friday term time only and for journeys to/from the school or college. You can use them from start of daytime services up to 0930 and from 1530 up to 1800 and, if in connection with the school or college curriculum, any time up to 2215.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also able to obtain a 16-18 photo card and a Network Scholar Season ticket that is valid on any operator's bus, train, and Metro service within the West Midlands metropolitan area.

For more information contact Walsall Council's Transport Team: 01922 653761 or 01922 653762.

Apprentices

WorkWise supports eligible apprentices to overcome barriers to travel within the Network West Midlands area. Workwise travel support offers eligible jobseekers and apprentices 50% off selected NWM and NX bus travel passes for up to 3 months when they start a new job or increase their hours to 16 or more per week if already employed. <https://www.networkwestmidlands.com/tickets-and-passes/jobseekers/or> Email: workwise@tfwm.org.uk

Bus Operators' Tickets

National Express West Midlands – Travel Cards and Term Plus

National Express West Midlands offer a range of tickets for young people between the ages 16-18, so long as they have a TfWM 16-18 photo card. There is also a Direct Debit option that does not require a TfWM 16-18 photo card, just proof from the student's school or college that they are in full-time education.

Travel cards are available for 1 week, 4 weeks and as Term Plus. They can be used all day, every day, as many times as you want.

[Local Bus Services | NX Bus West Midlands](#)

Diamond Network Termlink:

The Network Termlink Student ticket is valid on Diamond buses across the West Midlands and costs £250.00 a term.

[nBus Student Passes | Diamond Bus](#)

Arriva:

An Arriva West Midlands student ticket offers unlimited travel on Arriva buses only in the county area for £565.00 per academic year.

4. Information, advice, and support

Courses

For choice of courses, see [UCAS Progress web link](#). This gives information on the range of courses in your chosen area of study that are provided by schools, colleges, and training providers in your local area, or further afield.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

If you are aged between 16 and 19 and need some help with the costs of full-time education or training, you can apply to your school, college, or training provider for financial assistance from the 16 -19 Bursary Fund.

Students most in need will be eligible for a bursary of up to £1200* a year. This includes people in care, care leavers, people receiving Income Support or Universal Credit and disabled people receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. Young people eligible for Income Support will include some teenage parents, young people estranged from their families and those whose parents have died.

Other students facing financial difficulties may also be able to claim a bursary to help with the costs of transport, food, equipment, or other course-related costs. You must apply directly to your school, college, or training provider for a bursary. They decide on the amount you receive, when it is paid and what conditions they might attach, for example, linked to your attendance.

For advice speak to student support services or your tutor, or go to [16 to 19 bursary fund](#)

**£1200 maximum bursary is correct at April 2025 but may be subject to change by the Education Funding Agency.*

Non-employed Apprenticeship Students

The learning provider is responsible for ensuring that non-employed apprentices have their reasonable expenses met in full where this is needed to overcome barriers to learning. These may include the costs of travelling to or from the place of learning or work placement. Please contact your learning provider for more information.

WorkWise also offer a free, day travel pass to attend apprenticeship interviews, and, once an apprenticeship is secured, a free travel pass for the first four weeks of your new apprenticeship.

Care to Learn (C2L)

C2L can help pay for childcare and travel costs for young parents (aged under 20 at the start of the course) who want to continue their education or training and need help with the cost of travel and childcare. You cannot claim if you are a paid Apprentice or are doing a higher education course at university. Further details are available at [Link to care to learn website](#)

A*Stars

Walsall Council has developed an Active Sustainable Travel and Road Safety programme (A*STARS) which encourages a 'modal shift' to more environmentally friendly forms of transport and aims to increase road safety awareness. As part of this programme, schools are encouraged to adopt action plans to develop initiatives throughout the academic year. This information is published on the A*Stars website: [astars walsall web link](#). Through the development of the Sustainable Mode of Travel Strategy, a range of initiatives to promote and improve road safety, and sustainable travel modes to reduce car use on journeys, to and from school, have been introduced. These included measures to encourage more children and families to walk, cycle and use public transport on the school journey. There are initiatives for secondary schools, including Drive 2 Arrive for pre-drivers and new, young drivers, and advanced cycle training. Further initiatives covering post-16 students at secondary schools will be available as part of the 2025/26 A*Stars programme.

West Midlands Network

West Midlands Network is the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority and is responsible for developing and promoting public transport across the West Midlands metropolitan area. They produce the Network West Midlands transport map that gives information on all bus operators, routes, rail, and metro services.

A journey planner is also available from [Link to network west midlands website](#) or via the NetNav and New WM Apps.

Contacts

West Midlands Network
16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD
Phone: 0845 303 6760
[Network west midlands website](#)

Travel West Midlands
51 Bordesley Green, Birmingham, B9 4BZ
Phone: 0121 254 7272
Email: travelcare@travelwm.co.uk
[Travelwm website](#)

5. Independent Travel Training

Walsall Council's Special Schools and Colleges may provide independent training for their students.

Walsall Council has an Independent Travel Training scheme for young people in the borough. A travel training programme is offered to those young people for whom it is appropriate. More information on Independent Travel Training can be seen in Walsall Council's Local Offer pages. Contact: The Transport Team, Walsall Children's Services on 01922 653761 or 653762.

6. When should students apply for travel assistance?

Bursaries

You should discuss these with your learning provider, ideally in the academic term leading up to or immediately preceding the start of your course.

Public Transport Assistance

Applications for a 16-18 photo card are only available from your new school or college; you will not be able to apply for one until you enrol. They are available online. Term tickets can be purchased in September and can be used without the photo card itself until 30th September. A photo card must be in place by 1 October 2025.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

If you feel you may still qualify for transport assistance, contact the Transport Team in the academic term before the start of your course. You are likely to be offered independent travel training if this is appropriate for you. Your eligibility for travel assistance will be reassessed each academic year by the Council.

7. What help can Students apply for if they need to travel to a course that is beyond their local authority area?

Concessions detailed in this policy may only apply to journeys within the West Midlands metropolitan area. However, some colleges provide a bus service for their students.

The Council will assess the individual circumstances of each Student with special educational needs or disabilities and their need for travel assistance where those Students attend a course that is outside the Walsall area, if this is the nearest appropriate learning provider.

Students who need to travel to a course outside the borough of Walsall should contact Walsall Council's Children's Services Transport Team on 01922 653761 or 653762.

8. What help is available for Students who attend a college that is beyond daily travelling distance, and they need to stay away?

Some pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan attend residential schools or colleges that are outside Walsall borough. The transport needs of these Students will be assessed by the Council to determine the level of travel assistance required.

A national Residential Support Scheme provides help with the accommodation costs of Students aged 16 and over, who are studying to Level 2 or 3 for 16 hours a week for at least 10 weeks duration and who need to live away from home because their course is not available locally.

Ring the national helpline 0800 121 8989 or visit [Link to residential-support-scheme](#).

9. Complaints

If you have a complaint or wish to lodge an appeal against a decision relating to your transport needs and entitlements, then in the first instance you should follow your learning provider's complaints/appeals procedure.

However, if your complaint relates to travel assistance which has been withheld or provided by Walsall Council under this policy, or if the decision which you wish to appeal against was made by Walsall Council under this policy, then you should write to:

The Home to School Transport Manager
Walsall Children's Services
Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1TP

Phone: 01922 653761 or 653762

Email SENTransport@walsall.gov.uk for the attention of the Transport Manager

Your complaint will be investigated by a reviewing officer, and you will be notified of the outcome. The notification will include details of how to lodge an appeal though the Council if your complaint is not upheld.

10. Appeal Process

If you wish to lodge an appeal against a decision about transport or travel assistance which has been made by Walsall Council, then there is a two-stage process as follows:

Stage one: Review by a senior officer

A parent/carer/young adult has 20 working days from receipt of the Council's decision to make a written request to the Council asking for a review of the decision.

The written request should detail why the parent/carer/young adult believes the Council's decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances which the parent/carer/young adult believes should be considered when the Council's decision is reviewed.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the parent's/carer's/young adult's written request for a stage 1 review, a senior officer of the Council (who has not been involved in the case) shall review the original decision and send the parent/carer/young adult a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, setting out the following details:

- the decision which has been made.
- how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g., national Road Safety standards and guidance).

- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process.
- what factors were considered.
- the rationale for the decision reached.
- information about how the parent/carer/young adult can escalate their case to stage two (if appropriate).

Stage two: Review by an independent appeal panel

A parent/carer or young adult has 20 working days from their receipt of the Council's stage one written decision to make a written request to the Council to escalate the matter to stage two.

Within 40 working days of receipt by the Council of the parents/carers/young adult's stage 2 written request the Council will convene an independent appeal panel to consider written and verbal representations from both the parents/carers/young adult and officers involved in the case and give a detailed written notification of the outcome, setting out the following details:

- the decision which has been made.
- how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g., National Road Safety guidance and standards).
- information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process.
- what factors were considered.
- the rationale for the decision reached.
- Information about the parent's/carer's/young adult's right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman (see below) or where applicable, the Secretary of State.

The independent appeal panel members will be independent of the process to date and be suitably experienced, to ensure that a balance is achieved between meeting the needs of the parents/carers/young adult concerned and the Council, and that road safety requirements are complied with, and that no student is placed at unnecessary risk.

Local Government Ombudsman

Parents/carers/young adults have a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), but only if there is evidence of a failure by the Council to comply with the applicable procedural rules, or if there are any other irregularities in the way in which their appeal has been handled by the Council. Any complaint to the LGO must normally be made within twelve months, otherwise it will be out of time. The LGO will not normally review the merits of any individual Council decision. The LGO decides whether organisations have followed the right steps to make decisions or take action. The LGO cannot criticise decisions or actions by organisations if they were taken correctly.

Secretary of State for Education

Students of sixth form age or their families can also complain to the Secretary of State for Education using the contact form on gov.uk [education government website for contactus](#). Any complaint should outline the case, set out the decision taken by the Council and include any other relevant documentation (such as any advice or decision made by the LGO).

Judicial Review

If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply to the Courts for judicial review.

Policy dated: 31st May 2025.