

Medway Council

Post-16 Transport to Education and Learning Policy Statement

2026-2027



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Post-16 Transport Policy Statement – Academic Year 2026-2027

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

Transport policy statement for young people aged 16-18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and those young people aged 19 – 24 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

This policy is for Medway resident pupils.

This information is correct at the time of publication but may be subject to change.

The council has the following aims and objectives when assessing travel support:

- **Proud to be Medway** – taking pride in what we do.
- **Caring** – compassionate towards our communities and colleagues.
- **Respectful** – valuing Medway’s diversity, heritage and each another.
- **Trusted** – we do what we say, are open, and accountable.
- **Ambitious for Medway** – Innovative, bold and positive.
- **Collaborative** – working together – one Medway

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1. Introduction

Local authorities do not have a statutory duty to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support. Local authorities do, however, have a duty to prepare and publish an annual policy statement specifying the arrangement for the provision of transport and other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to assist in the facilitating the attendance of all persons over 16 receiving education or training.

This policy statement provides details of the support available for young people who are in the above groups.

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.

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that Medway Council considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

Employers and learning providers will want to take account of young people's likely transport arrangements when planning off site training, particularly outside normal working hours. This policy statement also contains details of other useful sources of information.

Department for Education Post 16 statutory guidance can be found using the following link: [Post 16 transport guidance](#)

1.1. Who this policy statement is for

The information in this policy statement is for young people who live in Medway and are:

- aged between 16-18 years old and engaged in learning or training
- are continuing on courses, which were started prior to the young person's 19th birthday
- aged 19-25 (inclusive with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) who are in education or training, but do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Young people who live outside of Medway (e.g. Swale, Gravesham, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling, etc.) but attend a provision in Medway must contact their home local authority to discuss what transport assistance they may offer.

Medway Council cannot assist young people who live outside of Medway.

Please note that there is no transport assistance available for travel to universities.

2. Local authority transport support

2.1. Travel assistance options available

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide free or subsidised travel assistance, Medway Council can provide a travel pass to enable a young person to travel to their place of learning/training. In some cases, we may also provide an adult travel pass so a suitable adult can accompany the young person if needed. This can be provided at a flat rate charge either in the form of a bus or rail pass.

To be considered eligible for this assistance the young person must meet the following criteria:

- young people aged between 16-18 years old;
- engaged learning or training
- who are continuing on courses, which were started prior to the young person's 19th birthday
- **and** who live in Medway (i.e. Council Tax for the home address is paid to Medway Council).

We will also consider the following issues when processing an application for travel assistance:

- journey times
- the impact a learning difficulty or disability may have on a young person's ability to walk the required distance
- the suitability of the journey e.g. the nature or the route and any alternative that a young person might be expected to take
- best practice for reasonable travel times (in most cases, no more than 75 minutes)
- the financial position of the applicant and their family
- the cost to the council, if appropriate
- sustainability
- safety
- whether there is a suitable nearer course
- whether the student has begun a particular course at the establishment before attaining the age of 19 and continues to attend that course
- choices made for reasons of religion or belief
- other sources of help available, such as the bursary fund

Important information to note:

The passes that Medway Council bulk purchase can be good value for money, depending on what it would cost you to purchase one direct. Medway Council does not subsidise the cost of these passes.

In some cases, families can purchase passes direct from bus or rail providers at a cheaper price.

Rail passes

Southeastern Railways provide Medway Council with a 34% reduction to the standard adult fare for journeys starting from Medway stations and this discount is passed onto learners.

Please note:

This reduction is only applied to journeys on Southeastern Railways. It cannot be applied where a journey uses two or more different providers (e.g. Southeastern Railways and Transport for London).

School Transport can provide you with an accurate quote for the young person's journey. To obtain this please email schooltransport@medway.gov.uk. You will need to provide the following information:

- young person's name
- date of birth
- home address
- dates travel required from and to
- Boarding point (station) and destination point (station)

Bus passes:

- For up-to-date information regarding options and prices of bus travel please see our website: [Post 16 transport](#).

3. The application process

How to apply

The application form for travel assistance is available online at [applyfortravelassistance](#)

Requests for a paper form can be emailed to the SEND Transport Team at senttransport@medway.gov.uk

The application process commences in April each year, in readiness for September of the next academic year.

Parents and carers only need to apply once for the academic year. The assessment will cover the remaining academic year if the eligibility criteria is met.

Parents and carers must tell us straight away if there is a change of circumstances and any changes in the information included on the travel assistance application.

Examples of changes in circumstances can include:

- change of home address
- change of school or college
- changes to benefits received
- changes in medication or mobility

Parents and carers may need to reapply if there has been a change in circumstances.

Points to note:

If you need to stay away from home to attend your course:

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If the education provision that you are attending is beyond daily travelling distance and you need to stay away from your home address in Medway in order to attend your course, Medway Council will not be able to assist with any travel expenses.

If you are in this situation please contact your education provision direct to ascertain what assistance is available or you can find further information of your options at [student finance-finance](#).

If you are attending a course that is outside of the Medway area:

If the course you wish to study is not available within the Medway area, you will be entitled to purchase a travel pass to the nearest appropriate institution providing the course concerned.

If you choose to study outside of the Medway area, when the course concerned is available within Medway, you may not be able to take advantage of the above assistance. All cases, however, will be considered on an individual basis.

4. Other travel assistance options available

Medway Youth Pass

This scheme entitles all young people who live in Medway to travel at a discounted rate on local bus services. Young people aged 16-18 can purchase a pass that will expire at the end of the academic year following their 18th birthday.

All journeys must start in Medway and can be to any destination in Medway or Kent.

For further details of this option, including the cost and how to apply, please visit [Medway youth pass](#).

Any questions regarding the Medway Youth Pass can be directed to the Bus Pass Administration Team (buspasses@medway.gov.uk).

MY school bus scheme

The MY School Bus scheme runs services to and from certain schools in Medway.

For further information on this scheme, including the available routes, costs and how to apply, please visit [MY Bus](#).

These services are very popular and in many cases a waiting list applies for people wanting to join the service. To enable a young person to use this service places must be pre booked by term.

Rail travel:

If you are aged between 16 and 25 you can purchase a railcard from National Rail, which can provide you with 1/3 off rail fares.

For up-to-date information on this you can go to any manned rail station or visit railcard.co.uk

The 16-19 Bursary Fund:

You could get a bursary to help pay for essential education-related costs if you're 16 to 19 and studying at a state school or college in England (not a university) and on a training course.

For full up to date information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund and how to apply, please visit [1619-bursaryfund](#)

CitizenCard:

Medway Council encourages the use of the CitizenCard, which confirms your age and identity. The Citizen card also provides various discounts and benefits.

For further information and details of how to apply, please visit citizencard.com

Care to Learn:

The Care to Learn scheme can help with childcare costs while you study.

You must be aged under 20 at the start of your course.

The scheme is available for publicly funded courses in England.

For full up to date information on the Care to Learn Scheme and how to apply, please visit caretolearn

Support from colleges:

Some colleges may also offer travel assistance for their students. If you wish to obtain details of what options they may have available for students, please contact the individual college direct.

5. Young people with an EHC plan

Travel assistance applications for young people with a current EHC plan will be processed and assessed in line with Medway Council's SEND Education Travel Assistance Policy.

For further advice and information on the eligibility criteria and process, please contact the team at sentransport@medway.gov.uk.

5.1. Financial contribution towards transport costs

Medway Council will assess all cases on an individual basis where the young person is unable to travel using public transport. All post 16 transport will incur a contribution towards the cost of any alternative travel assistance arrangements. This contribution will be equivalent to the cost of an annual bus pass.

As this is not a statutory responsibility, and the council is providing a discretionary service, an annual contribution of £850 is required towards the cost of travel assistance from the student/parent. This is reduced to £637.50 for low-income families. The option is available to pay your contribution on a monthly, termly, or annual basis over the academic year.

****We are reviewing the parent contribution towards SEND post 16 travel assistance and are consulting on the proposed penalty for non-payment. Please refer to the consultation document for further information. ****

A low-income family is one where a child receives free school meals because of the family's income, or their parents or carers receive any of the benefits listed below:

- Income Support.
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
- The maximum level of Working Tax Credit.
- Child Tax Credit – and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190.

- Universal Credit with an annual earned income of £7,400 or less.
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

6. Learners with learning difficulties and/or difficulties

6.1. Young people who do not have an EHC plan

If a young person (up to the age of 25) previously had an EHC plan we will consider requests for transport support, however no free transport will be offered.

All applications received for young people, who do not currently have an EHC plan but who require support due to learning difficulties or disabilities, will be referred to the SEN team who will initiate an assessment with agreement from the young person.

6.2. Young people who previously had a Statement of Special Educational Needs:

Young People will need to apply in the same way as all other mainstream pupils with supporting evidence of the previous Statement for Special Education Needs and details of the course being attended. All applications are assessed on an individual basis and an outcome provided to the applicant.

If you would like to discuss your individual circumstances prior to submitting any application for travel assistance, please contact the team on schooltransport@medway.gov.uk

6.3. Disabled Person's bus passes:

A disabled person's bus pass allows people with specified disabilities free off-peak bus travel throughout Medway and Kent.

For further information please visit [concessionary bus pass](#).

6.4. Mobility/independence training for learners who experience difficulties travelling

Some schools, colleges and training providers offer mobility/independence training. Please contact the individual institution direct for further details.

7. Suitability of travel arrangements

We aim to comply with Department for Education (DfE) guidance that states young people should be able to reach their education or training without incurring such stress, strain, or difficulty that they would be prevented from benefiting from the education provided.

For example, a young person should not have to make several changes of public service bus to get to their education or training, if that would result in an unreasonably long journey time. In this context, local authorities should consider which mode of transport will best meet the need to ensure a reasonable journey time.

We will assess each application on an individual basis to ensure the travel arrangements meet the young person's needs.

Travel arrangements will only be provided at the start and end of the school day.

Where particular classes, year group or pupils have a different start and finish time that is different from most pupils at the school, it will not normally be possible for the council to make separate travel arrangements. Schools may need to make arrangements to accommodate these pupils. There may be a small number of circumstances in which the council considers it appropriate to arrange transport at an alternative time of day, for example if a young person has a medical condition which means they are not well enough to attend for the whole day. Each case will be assessed on its own merits, and this does not set a precedent for other cases.

7.1. Parents/carers accompanying their children

A young person will not normally be eligible for travel assistance to school on the grounds of their special educational needs, disability, or mobility problem, or on the grounds that the route is unsafe if they would be able to walk to school if they were accompanied.

Where a young person does need to be accompanied, the general expectation is that they will be accompanied by a parent or carer unless there is a good reason it would not be reasonable to expect a parent or carer to do so. For example, a parent or carer's disability may prevent them from accompanying their child along a walking route.

Medway Council will work with families to promote and ensure equality of opportunity for young people whose parents or carers have a disability which prevents them from accompanying their child along a walking route and will consider relevant up to date medical information, when assessing an application, as long as it is provided at the time of application and is from a GP, Consultant or medical practitioner.

If a parent or carer is unable to accompany their child, due to being disabled or has a medical condition that prevents them from accompanying their child, we will ask parents or carers for proof of their medical condition. The council may make an exception and use its discretion and make reasonable adjustments to provide travel assistance.

7.2. Journey times

As a general guide, there is a reasonable expectation that the maximum journey time should be 75 minutes each way for young people of sixth form age, including any time taken to walk to a pickup point, bus stop or train station. It is, however, recognised this may not always be possible.

Depending on where your child lives and which school they attend, the existing transport infrastructure and traffic build up in peak times might mean this is not always possible.

Parents/carers should note that journey times include local traffic delays, time taken to on/off board a student from transport along with various collection/drop off points along the journey.

7.3. Reviews

Reviews for travel arrangements may be required if circumstances change from the date of your original application.

Reasons for a more frequent review are:

- change of school or home address
- change in the health or SEND or associated needs of the young person, parent or carer, or other member of the family that affects the child getting to school

Unless otherwise agreed, applications for post 16 travel assistance must be submitted on an annual basis, and all existing arrangements are subject to an annual review process overseen by the Council's SEND Travel Assistance Panel.

7.4. Awards made in error

Where a decision to provide travel assistance has been made in error, we have the right to withdraw this after first considering the circumstances of each case to determine whether there are exceptional reasons for provision to continue. Where it is decided to withdraw assistance, up to one term's notice will be given. If the error was discovered before the commencement of the academic year, the arrangements will be withdrawn immediately.

8. Useful contact information:

Department for Education: [education.gov.uk](https://www.education.gov.uk)

Bus and Coach information: 0871 200 2233 [traveline](https://www.traveline.co.uk).

Train Information: 0345 322 7021 [southeasternrailway.co.uk](https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk)

National Rail Enquiries: 03457 484 950 [nationalrail.co.uk](https://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

Additional transport and travel assistance information relating to students with SEND

SEND Local Offer

The SEND Local Offer gives children and young people in the area, who have special educational needs and/or a disability, information in one place. The Medway SEND Local Offer aims to provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about what services and provisions are available in Medway for parents and young people.

For more information, go to [local offer](#)

9. Appeals procedure

The SEND Transport Team will provide in writing the reasons for the refusal of an application at the point of assessment.

Appeals against a refusal of assistance or the suitability of the travel assistance provided are considered on an individual basis and does not set a standard practice for future cases. The written request should detail why the parent or carer believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent or carer believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

Appeals will be considered in a 2-part process:

- Stage one – provides an opportunity for a senior officer not involved in the initial decision-making process to review the decision

- Stage two – a full and final decision will be made by an independent appeal panel of senior council officers that were not part of any previous decisions made, and the parent or carer will be invited to a hearing to present their case, which will be held in person at a Medway Council venue or held virtually. Councillors will be able to represent constituents at the panel hearing, if required.

Where a parent or carer does not wish or is unable to attend a hearing, the panel will make its decision based on the parent or carer's written representations.

If a parent or carer feels we have failed to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way an appeal was handled, they have the right to refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, or to request a judicial review if they believe the decision to refuse travel is flawed on public law grounds.

The flowchart within this policy, 'appendix 1' provides further information on the process and timelines.

More information on appeals is at [home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance](#)

10. Complaints

Complaints about the service provided by us relating to Home to School Travel Arrangements can be made by using our complaints procedure. This is available at [complaints](#)

11. Appendix 1: the appeals process

The following sets out the full review and appeals process:

1. **Officer A** declines a parent's school travel application or offers travel arrangements that a parent considers unsuitable.
2. Within **20 working days** of receiving Officer A's decision, the parent submits their written appeal.
3. **Stage one: review by a senior officer (Officer B)** – Within **20 working days** of receiving the parent's request, Officer B (a senior officer) reviews Officer A's decision and notifies the parent in writing of the outcome. Officer B has not been party to officer A's decision.
4. Within **20 working days** of receiving Officer B's decision, the parent submits written notification that they wish to escalate the matter to stage 2.
5. **Stage two: review by an independent appeal panel** – Within **40 days** of receiving the parent's notification, an independent appeal panel considers written/oral representations from the parent, Officer A and Officer B, and reaches a decision.
6. Within **5 working days** of reaching their decision, the independent appeal panel notifies the parent in writing.
7. A parent may make a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) if they feel the local authority has made a mistake in the way it has handled their case; or may request a judicial review if they believe the decision to refuse travel is flawed on public law grounds.