



# Post 16 School Transport Statement

2023-24

## **SUMMARY**

This document summarises arrangements for Post 16 school transport.

## **OWNER**

Anne Tarrant, School Transport Manager

## **VERSION**

v.4

## **DATE**

January 2023

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Company number 11293709

## Contents

Contents .....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
2. Responsibilities and Duties .....	3
3. Travel Assistance .....	3
4. General transport available.....	3
5. Support for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) aged 16 to 19 .....	4
6. Support for Students with SEND aged 19-25 .....	4
7. Medical Grounds .....	5
8. Application and Review Process .....	5
9. How to Appeal a Decision .....	6
10. How to Make a Complaint or seek remedy to an issue with transport .....	7

## 1. Introduction

Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement by 31 May each year. Brighter Futures for Children (the Company) completes this for the Reading Borough Council.

This statement specifies the arrangements for transport that the Company considers is necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of sixth form students receiving education or training.

The Company's Post-16 Transport Policy Statement provides information on travel and transport arrangements that are available to young people who are above statutory school age, which ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they turn 16.

The Company's ambition is that every student in the borough achieves their full potential. We are committed to ensuring that those aged 16 and over as explained above (including those with Education, Health and Care Plans up to the age of 25) have access to educational opportunities at school, college, or other education settings. Part of this ambition is for as many students as possible to travel independently using a sustainable form of transport.

This Statement applies to any young person who is living in the Reading Borough Council area. Students who do not live in the Reading Borough Council area should refer to the Transport Policy and Statement issued by their home Local Authority.

## 2. Responsibilities and Duties

The statement is published in line with the statutory duties under the Education Act 1996, including s.509AA and s.509AB and takes into account the Department for Education statutory guidance – Post-16 transport to education and training, January 2019.

## 3. Travel Assistance

Students are now required to be in education, employment or training until their 18th birthday, which 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. There has not, however, been any change to statutory school age which ends at the end of the academic year in which the student turns 16.

Under the current law, there is no automatic entitlement to free transport from home to school or to another educational setting once a student is 16 and over. However, the Company is required to facilitate the attendance of all those of sixth form age i.e. those students in school years 12 to 14 who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. This may involve travel assistance, but the Company does not have to provide this assistance free of charge.

Responsibility for attendance lies with the student and their parents/carers.

## 4. General transport available

There are a number of public transport service providers in Reading. Some colleges and schools in Reading and surrounding boroughs have their own transport arrangements but each arrangement can vary.

Young people should check with their setting about the transport arrangements and ticketing prices that can apply to both bus and train travel.

The Company has arrangements with some local bus and train operators for the purchase of annual season tickets at preferential rates e.g. Reading Buses.

The parent/young person should contact the relevant transport provider to purchase tickets.

Certain Colleges such as Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) and Henley College provide buses from Reading to the College at a charge. For further information please contact the respective college.

## 5. Support for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) aged 16 to 19

To qualify for travel assistance from the Company, the following criteria will be considered. Transport needs will be assessed as part of the Education, Health and Care Plan annual review process.

Transport assistance is based on travel from the home address, as defined in the School Transport Policy, to the educational placement(s) named in Section I of the Education, Health & Care Plan.

- The student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a named school/s or educational setting/s.
- The named school is the nearest suitable school as defined in the Schools Transport Policy
- The student is unable to travel on public transport due to their Special Educational Needs, disability or mobility difficulty;
- The programme of learning is full-time (i.e. at least 540 plus guided learning (planned and funded) hours per year;
- The student lives more than 3 miles walking distance from the school or educational setting as measured by the Company, or they are unable to walk the distance because of their Special Educational Needs, disability or mobility difficulty.

## 6. Support for Students with SEND aged 19-25

There are additional responsibilities under Section 508F and Section 508G of the Education Act 1996 for the Company to provide transport for some students. These students must meet the following criteria:

- be an adult aged between 19 and 25 years with an EHCP
- live in the Local Authority area
- the educational setting must be named in the student's Education, Health and Care Plan
- the educational setting must be more than 3 miles away from the student's home address, unless the student is unable to walk that distance as a result of their SEND, even if accompanied, or the route is unsafe
- the student is unable due to his or her special educational needs and disabilities to use public transport independently

Students who have been assessed and are eligible for travel assistance will be allocated travel assistance appropriate to their assessed needs. This may be specialised if they require equipment to enable them to be transported.

Where a student with SEND starts a new course at aged 19 or older, any transport assistance is funded by the Council, as they are Adult Learners. Travel assistance to the educational setting would continue until the end of the academic year in which the student turns 25.

For advice on financial support to access higher education please contact Student Finance England on 0300 100 0607.

## 7. Medical Grounds

If a young person has a temporary or enduring medical condition making it impossible to walk to school, then assistance may be provided. Applications for assistance on this basis will need to be supported by appropriate evidence from the medical profession. Evidence required by the Company may include, but may not be restricted to, a letter from the young person's General Practitioner or Consultant or both and must be supplied at no cost to the Company. The evidence must have been provided in the 6 months prior to the date of application.

If a parent feels the young person may be eligible, they need to contact and discuss this with the SEN Team.

The Company reserves the right to consult with relevant health professionals for further advice and may choose to seek comment from the educational institution or school attended by the child or young person.

## 8. Application and Review Process

### Application process

#### **Pupils with an EHCP**

Applications are made to the SEND Team and assessed by the SEND Panel to make a decision.

### Review process

Provision of travel assistance at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement and the requirement will be reviewed by the Company on a regular basis.

All students who receive travel assistance will be subject to review:

- following the successful completion of Independent Travel Training;
- at the annual review meeting if the students has an Education, Health and Care Plan;
- following a change in circumstances.

If during the course of any academic year the Company determines that the provision of home to school transport is no longer appropriate, it will stop at the end of the term in which the decision was made.

Travel assistance is only awarded for one academic year, for courses longer than one year a new application has to be made each year.

## 9. How to Appeal a Decision

If you applied for assistance with home to school transport and your child is not offered assistance or the transport being provided is unsuitable, you do have a right to challenge the decision through the appeals process. This guide will take you through the appeals process.

### Grounds for Challenge

There are only two grounds for appeal, and these are:

- That you believe the policy has NOT been applied correctly;
- That you believe the policy HAS been properly applied correctly but the exceptional circumstances outlined in the application have not been fully considered.

How to make an appeal.

If you believe that one of the two grounds for appeal apply you can challenge the decision. There are two stages to the appeals process.

### Stage One

This appeal will be reviewed by a senior officer in the School Transport Service, the Reviewing Officer.

An appeal should be submitted, via the online form ([https://reading-self.achieveservice.com/en/AchieveForms/?form\\_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-1a6aff7c-82df-41a6-8277-b0c6c2d83a1c/AF-Stage-d3dccd92-82c4-4d15-bae8-b1e8ea60ed93/definition.json&redirectlink=/&cancelRedirectLink=/&category=AF-Category-0c39d40f-83aa-4cef-9790-1719ad0c268a&noLoginPrompt=1](https://reading-self.achieveservice.com/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-1a6aff7c-82df-41a6-8277-b0c6c2d83a1c/AF-Stage-d3dccd92-82c4-4d15-bae8-b1e8ea60ed93/definition.json&redirectlink=/&cancelRedirectLink=/&category=AF-Category-0c39d40f-83aa-4cef-9790-1719ad0c268a&noLoginPrompt=1)).

This should be completed and submitted within 20 working days from the receipt of the Authority's written decision not to award assistance. The form will ask you to state which of the two grounds you are appealing on and why you are appealing.

If you are appealing on exceptional circumstances or low income you will be able to upload further evidence not included in your original application. Do not include the evidence submitted with your original application.

Reviewing Officer will review your original application within 20 working days of receipt and parents/carers will be notified in writing.

If you would like a hard copy of the appeals form, please email:

[School.transport@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:School.transport@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

**OR write to:**

#### **School Transport Service**

Brighter Futures for Children  
Civic Offices  
Bridge Street  
Reading RG1 2LU

**Or call:**

0118 937 2542

## Stage Two

If your appeal is not upheld, and the original decision remains you have a second chance to challenge the decision.

Again, this should be completed and submitted, via the online form ([https://reading-self.achieveservice.com/en/AchieveForms/?form\\_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-1a6aff7c-82df-41a6-8277-b0c6c2d83a1c/AF-Stage-d3dccd92-82c4-4d15-bae8-b1e8ea60ed93/definition.json&redirectlink=/&cancelRedirectLink=/&category=AF-Category-0c39d40f-83aa-4cef-9790-1719ad0c268a&noLoginPrompt=1](https://reading-self.achieveservice.com/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-1a6aff7c-82df-41a6-8277-b0c6c2d83a1c/AF-Stage-d3dccd92-82c4-4d15-bae8-b1e8ea60ed93/definition.json&redirectlink=/&cancelRedirectLink=/&category=AF-Category-0c39d40f-83aa-4cef-9790-1719ad0c268a&noLoginPrompt=1)).

This should be completed and submitted within 20 working days from the receipt of the Reviewing Officers written decision not to award assistance. The form will ask you to state which of the two grounds you are appealing on and why you are appealing.

The parent should request that their appeal be progressed to Stage Two where it will be reviewed by an Independent Officer Panel headed by a senior officer from Brighter Futures for Children.

Parents can submit additional information and will be invited to attend. Officers on this panel will have had no involvement in the original decision making. The appeal date will be within 40 working days of receipt of your request and any additional supporting information. Prior to the case being heard, a full copy of all correspondence will be sent to the parent.

Parent will be informed of the outcome within 5 days of the hearing. Full details of the decision will be provided.


### Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

If you believe there has been an administrative fault, at any time during your appeal, with the way Brighter Futures for Children has handled your appeal, you may contact the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSO) who investigates complaints about Councils:

PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH (Tel: 0300 061 0641) [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

## 10. How to Make a Complaint or seek remedy to an issue with transport

- 10.1. If things go wrong, the School Transport Service will endeavour to rectify the situation swiftly, to the satisfaction of all parties, as long as the solution is not outside the boundaries of this policy
- 10.2. For issues identified by schools or families that require a remedy relating to the delivery of service from the provider e.g:
  - lateness of transport
  - changing schedule (within policy reasons; e.g sickness, INSET days etc.)
- 10.3. Please refer to your travel schedule and contact the operator directly in the first instance. This will likely remedy you concern quicker than reporting to a third party first. If you have an issue that persists, please contact the School Transport service on [school.transport@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:school.transport@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)
- 10.4. Any pupil, parent or carer wishing to make a formal complaint relating to Home to School Transport arrangements, should contact the Customer Relations Team:



Call: 0118 937 3787

Write:

Freepost RTLS-CKGX-RKLL  
Brighter Futures for Children  
Customer Relations Team  
Bridge Street  
Reading RG1 2LU

Email us at: [complaints@reading.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@reading.gov.uk)