

Darlington Borough Council

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

2025/26

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement - Academic Year – 2025/26

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.

Department Responsible: People Services

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Contents

Introduction

Aims and Objectives

Transport and travel support

- Concessionary tickets for young people 16-25 from public transport providers

- Travel support from schools and colleges

- The 16-19 Bursary Fund

- Young parents / Care to Learn

LA support

- LA support for young people without special educational needs or a disability

- LA support for Learners with special educational needs or a disability

- Travel training

- Apprenticeships

- Those not in education, employment or training (NEET)

- LA support in other circumstances

- Additional eligibility criteria

Applying for LA transport support

Appeals

Introduction

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers necessary to make, to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support. 'Sixth form age' refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (years 12,13,14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties / disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25. This policy uses the term 'Post 16' to include both learners of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties / disabilities up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that Darlington Borough Council (the council) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

Legislative Background

The legislation regarding transport for further education is covered under Section 509AA of the 1996 Education Act.

Darlington Borough Council's Aims

Improve the quality of life for all and reduce inequality by ensuring we have:

- More people healthy and independent
- Children with the best start in life
- A safe and caring community
- More businesses and more jobs
- More people active and involved
- More people caring for our environment
- Enough support for people when needed
- A place designed to thrive

Purpose and Objectives

To improve access to post compulsory education, through transport advice and solutions.

1. To provide students with information and advice and to promote best value travel options, in particular to reduce the proportion of car driver trips.
2. To develop practical solutions where travel costs are a barrier to accessing further education.
3. To tackle traffic congestion on key corridors and its potential impact on the economy and environment by making the most effective use of the transport network.
4. To improve access to employment and education, particularly for those without access to a private car, those with a disability and those that have greatest need.

Transport and Travel Support

Darlington Local Authority does not provide free travel assistance for Post 16 students. Concessionary tickets for young people 16-25 can be obtained from public transport providers.

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 2024 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2024 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2024 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.

Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning.

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days)

- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to the childcare provider

Types of childcare

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club
-

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child(ren) they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

- your childcare provider needs to confirm your child's attendance
- your school or college needs to confirm that you're attending your course

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Attendance

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding.

This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres
-

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under 19 Bus Only Ticket or for 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>

Students 16-18 with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Where a student (resident in Darlington) has an EHCP, a learning difficulty and/or a disability, they will need to apply to the transport team via an application form which can be obtained by contacting the School Travel and Transport Team on 01325 405905 or 405904 or by emailing schooltraveltransport@darlington.gov.uk.

Eligibility

The learner must:

- Live in Darlington
- Be on a full-time learning or study programme or a full-timework placement (i.e. at least 540 plus guided learning (planned and funded) hours per year)
- live more than three miles from the school/college (education provider), as measured by the council, (the three miles limit is not applicable to students unable to walk the distance to school/college because of SEN, a disability or mobility difficulty)
- attend the nearest establishment that provides the full-time programme of learning or work placement that you wish to follow, whilst having had reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided.

Where public transport is not considered appropriate, the student's needs will be taken account of, should transport provision be awarded and an assessment will consider a suitable alternative offer. Students must have commenced the course before their 19th birthday. For students with an EHCP, transport provision can continue until the student has completed their programme up to a maximum age of 25.

Assistance Provided

Details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, bus passes or travel cards available for learners aged 16-18 and who provides them, plus any costs to the learner can be accessed through the following websites. The sites contain information on providers in education or training within Darlington, North Yorkshire, Durham, Stockton and Middlesbrough.

Darlington Family Information Service

<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/families-information-team/>

Stockton Information Directory

<http://www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org>

Middlesbrough Family Information Service

<https://fis.middlesbrough.gov.uk/kb5/middlesbrough/fsd/home.page>

County Durham Family Information Service

<http://www.countydurhamfamilies.info/kb5/durham/fsd/home.page>

North Yorkshire Family Information Service

<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/26031/Post-16-transport-assistance>

Arriva

<https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/north-east/bus-tickets/>

UTC South Durham

<https://www.utcsouthdurham.org/useful-information/transport-to-utc-south-durham>

Appeals

If an application for assistance for a student 16-18 who has a learning difficulty and/or a disability, has been unsuccessful, an appeal can be made in writing to the Transport Team Manager, People Services, Transport Team, Room 201, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT.

The appeals process is outlined in appendix 1.

Publication of the transport policy statement

The authority is required through its policy statement to provide a link to the government's website which provides information to the general public.

<https://www.gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19>

Any queries relating to the links should be directed to – local-direct-admin@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk

Note - Although the information contained in this statement was correct as of May 2025 it should not be assumed that there will be no change affecting the relevant information or matters detailed in the Post 16 Policy Statement for 2025/2026, before the start of, or during, 2025/2026 academic year or in relation to subsequent academic years. You should contact: School Travel & Transport Team, People Services, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT. Tel: 01325 405904 or 405905 where any subsequent changes that have had to be made to be compliant with relevant statutory regulations, will be highlighted.

Appendix 1

Post 16 Transport Appeals Process

Stage 1:

A parent has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's transport decision to make a written request asking for review of the decision.

The written request should detail why the parent believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the parent's written appeal request a senior officer reviews the original decision and send the parent a detailed written response outlining:

- The nature of the decision reached;
- How the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g. road safety);
- 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 escalation to stage 2 (if appropriate).

Stage 2:

Parents has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one decision to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage 2.

Within 40 working days an independent appeal panel considers written and verbal representations from the parent and officers and gives a detailed written outcome detailing:

- The nature of the decision reached;
- How the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g. road safety);
- 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;

The independent appeal panel members should be independent of the process to date and suitably experienced, to ensure a balance is achieved between meeting the needs of the parents/student and the local authority and that road safety requirements are complied with.

Should the outcome not result in a satisfactory outcome as far as the parent/student is concerned that they can make a complaint through the council's complaints department, details of which can be found under the heading of 'Complaints' within the policy statement.