

Southampton City Council Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement for Young People and Young Adults to Support Education and Training 2025-2026



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Version	1.0	Approved by	Cabinet
Date last amended	03/03/25	Approval date	28/01/25
Lead officer	Service Manager	Publication Date	05/03/2025
Contact	annamarie.hooper@southampton.gov.uk	Effective date	01/09/2025

Introduction

- I. This Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement for Young People and Young Adults to Support Education and Training 2025-2026 (Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement) sets out Southampton City Council's approach to the operation of the School Travel Service in Southampton for young people of sixth form age; 16-18 year olds (over compulsory school age but under 19 years of age) and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) aged under 25 years where they are continuing a course started before their 19th birthday.
- II. This Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement sets out the Southampton City Council's responsibility for sixth form age duty to ensure that young people of sixth form age are able to access the education and training of their choice, and if support for access is requested, how it will be assessed and provided where necessary.
- III. Additionally, this Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement sets out the arrangements for the adult transport duty for the provision of travel support to those with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation to ensure they are able to undertake further education and training after their 19th birthday to help them move towards more independent living, in respect of:
 - a. Young adults (i.e. those who are aged 19 or over) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at local authority maintained or assisted further or higher education institutions or institutions within the further education sector where they are attending a course which they started after their 19th birthday; and
 - b. Young adults with an EHCP (which can only be maintained up until the age of 25) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education or training outside the further and higher education sectors where they are attending a course which they started after their 19th birthday. For those young adults, the local authority's duty only applies where the local authority has secured the provision of education or training at that institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training.
- IV. The purpose of this Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement is to set out the framework within which Southampton City Council will deliver its statutory responsibilities to provide travel support for eligible post-16 learners; young people and young adults, under the Education Acts 1996 and 2011, and the Equality Act 2010.
- V. Where this Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement refers to a young people and young adults (or adult learners) collectively, they will be referred to as 'students'.
- VI. The statutory walking distance of 3 miles to school (along the nearest available route) for those of compulsory school aged 8 and over is set out under section 444(5) of the Education Act 1996. This can be taken into account by local authorities in defining the distance a student might reasonably be expected to walk to access education or training.
- VII. This Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement is for students, however, Southampton City Council understands that in some cases, students may delegate authority for their parent or carer to undertake applications, appeals and discussions relating to travel support on their behalf.
- VIII. This Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement will refer to education and training providers as 'education settings'.

- IX. The legislation gives local authorities the discretion to determine what travel and financial support are necessary to facilitate student attendance. The local authority must exercise its power to provide travel or financial support reasonably, taking into account all relevant matters.
- X. This Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement applies to students whose permanent home address is within the administrative boundaries of Southampton City Council. Students studying in, but not resident in Southampton, should refer to the relevant transport policies issued by the local authority in their resident area.

Legislative Context and other Related Documents

- I. This Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement takes into consideration how Southampton City Council will deliver its statutory duties to provide travel support as set out in the Education Acts, which outline the categories of students who are eligible for local authority funded travel support.
- II. This Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement fulfils the requirements of Section 509 of the Education Act 1996 as amended by the Education Act 2002 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learnings Act 2009 in relation to post-16 learners.
- III. This Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement takes into consideration the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- IV. This Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement also reflects the requirements set out in:
 - Department for Education's Post 16 transport and travel support to education and training statutory guidance for local authorities, January 2019.
 - Part 5 of the Transport Act 1985.

1. Travel Support for Young People and Young Adults in Further Education and Training

Support Provided by Local Education and Training Providers

- 1.1. Discounts and concessionary fares may be available to learners through individual education and training providers. Details of schemes available through local providers (within Southampton and neighbouring areas) are available in **Appendix 3**.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

- 1.2. 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 bursaries; a vulnerable bursary and a discretionary bursary, details of both are available in **Appendices 2 and 3**.

Young Parents / Care to Learn

- 1.3. For young parents under 20, Care to Learn can help you pay your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you are learning. More details are available in **Appendix 4**.

Travel Support Provided by Southampton City Council

- 1.4. Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support.
- 1.5. Southampton City Council will direct applicants to explore all options for bursaries and support available in the first instance.
- 1.6. Where a student is of 'sixth form age' and up until the age of 25 and attending a further education provision or an apprenticeship placement, legislation gives local authorities the discretion to determine what travel support is necessary to facilitate a student's attendance.
- 1.7. Southampton City Council recognises that travel support to enable students to get to and from an education setting can have a positive impact on some vulnerable students and may provide travel support to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age to young adults up until the age of 25 receiving education or training and will assess each student on a case-by-case basis.
- 1.8. 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.
- 1.9. Travel support will be considered by Southampton City Council's SEND team for students with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or by a panel of Southampton City Council Officers from the SEND team and the School Travel Service for exceptional circumstances applications for students with SEND or limited mobility who do not have an EHCP, and travel support will be provided based on assessed need.
- 1.10. The following factors will be taken into consideration when assessing the provision of travel support for students. The list is not exhaustive and is not limited to these factors and travel support will not be automatically awarded based on these factors.
 - The educational outcomes of the student.
 - The health and wellbeing of the student, parent or carer and other family members.
 - Duties under the Equalities Act 2010.
 - Health and safety risks to the student or others that may apply if they travelled to their education setting without support.
 - Extraordinary circumstances that arise of a parent or carer's work or caring commitments.
 - Extraordinary circumstances that arise in relation to a student's parental or care duties.

- A special need or medical condition that may prevent the student from walking to school or using public transport.
 - A special need or medical condition that may prevent parents or carers from being able to accompany the student, and it is reasonable to expect that the student requires accompaniment.
- 1.11. Southampton City Council will only offer travel support to students attending the nearest education setting which offers a course or programme which meets the needs of the student, taking into consideration the age, ability and aptitude of the student (including any SEND requirement) and the course that they would like to study.
- 1.12. For eligible students, Southampton City Council will offer the most sustainable, cost-effective, suitable method via a hierarchy of travel support as assessed by Southampton City Council. More details about the travel support options can be found in **Section 2** of this policy statement.
- 1.13. The statutory duty for education provision for post-16 education is 18 hours over three days a week, therefore, Southampton City Council will work with post-16 education providers to offer 18 hours over three days where possible to reduce the travel support commitment. Travel support will still be provided where education settings cannot meet this.
- 1.14. In exceptional cases where the provision of a vehicle is assessed as the appropriate form of travel support:
- Travel support will be provided to the education setting that is assessed by Southampton City Council to be the nearest suitable placement for the student and which offers a course or programme which meets the needs of the applying student.
 - Where a suitable course cannot be provided in Southampton, Southampton City Council will offer travel support to the next nearest education setting offering the appropriate course that meets Southampton City Council's assessed needs or a student's needs.
- 1.15. For young people who have deferred a year and are therefore still at school beyond 16 years of age, travel support will be considered on a case-by-case basis where the child has previously, until age 16 years, been eligible for travel support.
- 1.16. All students carrying on their education post-16 must reapply for travel support.
- 1.17. Students must reapply for travel support when changing to another course within the same education setting or a different education setting; the travel support eligibility does not transfer from course to course or to an alternative education setting.
- 1.18. The period for which travel support is awarded will be dependent on the individual circumstances of the student and may be for a fixed time period, or ongoing with an agreed review frequency.

Post-19 Adult Learners

- 1.19. Students over the age of 19 are considered 'adult learners'. Under Section 508F of the Education Act 1996, Southampton City Council has a duty to make arrangements for the provision of travel support free of charge, as appropriate and in line with the adult learner's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 1.20. Adult learners over the age of 19 and under the age of 25 may qualify for travel support under this provision. Travel support for eligible adult learners will be provided free of charge.
- 1.21. This will only apply to post-19 adult learners who are receiving further education at an education setting and are in receipt of an EHCP.

- 1.22. Post-19 adult learners will be required to evidence why is necessary for the Southampton City Council to provide travel support and why the adult learner cannot use other entitlements for their travel, such as use of a mobility vehicle, a bursary or discretionary support from an education setting, or whether the student has support from the Council's social care service to assist with travel.
- 1.23. Adult learners' eligibility for travel support and the type of provision offered will be assessed by Southampton City Council having regard to a learner's assessed needs as set out in their EHCP, and travel support will still be provided to eligible young adults who have evidenced that they have explored alternative options before applying for travel support.

Students with Medical Conditions

- 1.24. Travel support for a student may be provided where written evidence from a GP or hospital consultant (or other appropriate independent professional) is provided stating:
- What medical or mental health conditions the student has and how this affects their ability to walk to and from their education setting.
 - The student cannot walk the given distance to and from their education setting.
 - How long the situation is likely to last.

Parent or Carer Medical Conditions

- 1.25. Travel support may be provided where written evidence is provided from a GP or hospital consultant (or other appropriate independent professional) confirming that the student requires accompaniment to and from their education setting. In addition, the written evidence provided must include:
- What medical or mental health condition the parent or carer has where they are the only adult responsible for taking the student to and from an education setting and how this affects their ability to accompany the student to and from the education setting.
 - How long the situation is likely to last.

Appeals Process

- 1.26. Students have a right to appeal against the decision made by Southampton City Council to provide travel support. The appeals process is outlined in **Section 2** of this policy statement and is set out in more detail in **Appendix 5**.

2. Additional Information

Applying for Travel Support

- 2.1. Students who wish to apply for travel support can do so by completing Southampton City Council's School Travel Service form, details of which can be found at: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/in-school/school-travel-support/>, or alternatively, a paper copy can be obtained by writing to the Southampton City Council at **School Travel Service, Civic Centre, Southampton. SO14 7LY** or by phoning Southampton City Council on **023 8083 2419**.

Travel Support Considerations

- 2.2. When considering what type of travel support is appropriate for each student, Southampton City Council will consider:
- The age and maturity of the student.
 - The ability and aptitude of the student.
 - Any special educational needs the student may have.
 - The type of vehicle the student is travelling on, and the length of the journey.
 - The nature of the possible routes from home to an education setting, particularly in relation to safety.
 - Whether the student is physically able to walk the distance involved.
 - Whether the student needs to be accompanied and whether it is possible for the student to be accompanied
- 2.3. The travel support needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities will be reassessed when a young person moves from compulsory schooling to post-16 education, even if the young person is remaining at the same education setting.
- 2.4. The statutory walking distance of 3 miles (along the nearest available route) used for those of compulsory school aged 8 and over for distance to school will be taken into account when defining the distance that a student might reasonably be expected to walk to access their education setting.
- 2.5. When considering whether a student's parent or carer can reasonably be expected to accompany the student on the journey, a range of factors will be taken into consideration, including the age of the student and whether one would ordinarily expect a student of that age to be accompanied.
- 2.6. Where travel support is found to have been granted in error, 4 weeks' notice or notice to the end of the current half term will be given, whichever is the shorter period, to allow students time to make other arrangements.

Travel Support Options

- 2.7. Local authorities have a duty to promote the use of sustainable travel on journeys to and from places of education in their area. If a student is eligible for travel support, this will be provided via the most sustainable, cost-effective, suitable method as assessed by Southampton City Council.
- 2.8. If a student is eligible for travel support, Southampton City Council will consider a range of options to establish the most appropriate option via a hierarchy of travel support.
- 2.9. The options for travel support will be considered by Southampton City Council in a clear hierarchical order, which is set out below:

1. Travel Training

Independent Travel Training (ITT) gives students the essential skills needed to travel independently either on foot, by other sustainable travel option, such as bike or manual

scooter (not e-scooter), or by public transport.

Students with SEND will be assessed for ITT, allowing them to have the confidence and ability to travel independently after specialist training.

2. Sustainable Travel, Such as Bike or Scooter

If Southampton City Council offers ITT, it may provide a budget to the student to purchase a bike or a manual scooter (not e-scooter) and appropriate safety equipment. The value will be assessed by the Independent Travel Trainer based on the cost of a suitable bike or scooter and safety equipment when the travel support option is agreed.

If the student holds a provisional driving licence and is of appropriate age and a travel grant (see 4. Travel Grant below) is awarded as the travel support option, the travel grant may be used to contribute towards the cost of using a Voi e-bike/e-scooter.

3. Bus Pass/Rail Pass

A bus pass or a rail pass for the journey to and from the education setting provider will be provided to the student where it is determined that the student can travel independently to the education setting using the bus or rail service.

If Southampton City Council offers ITT, it may provide bus pass or a rail pass for the journey to and from the education setting, if using the bus or rail is the safest, most suitable way for a student to travel to and from the education setting.

4. Travel Grant

If travel support options 1-3 in the hierarchy are not suitable for the student, a travel grant will be provided to students to contribute towards the cost of the student making their own travel arrangements to the education setting. Please see **Sections 2.16-2.21** of this policy statement for more information.

5. Personal Travel Budgets (PTBs)

A PTB is mileage allowance which students can use in any reasonable way to get themselves to and from an education setting. Please see **Sections 2.22-2.27** of this policy statement for more information.

Independent Travel Training

- 2.10. Southampton City Council is committed to sustainable travel, and if travel support is agreed, it will be provided via the most cost-effective suitable method as assessed by the Southampton City Council School Travel Service.
- 2.11. All applications for post-16 students will be assessed for ITT.
- 2.12. All students already in receipt of travel support and that have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), will be routinely considered, whether they are suitable for independent travel training.
- 2.13. Where Southampton City Council offers ITT as the travel support offer, a Travel Trainer will work with the student to build their confidence and ability to travel independently.
- 2.14. Independent Travel Training for pupils with SEND or limited mobility is tailored and practical help for those with SEND requirements is provided to support travel by public transport, on foot or by bike.

2.15. Further information on ITT is available at:
<https://myjourneysouthampton.com/education/independent-travel-training/>.

Travel Grant

2.16. Students who are assessed as eligible for travel support, and only where independent travel support is not a suitable option, will be offered a travel grant (a sum of money) to contribute towards the cost for the student to make their own travel arrangements for the purpose of travel to and from their education setting.

2.17. The travel grant will be offered to all eligible new students starting post-16 education and continuing students starting a new course. This may also be preferable to post-16-18 young people who will be required to make a means tested contribution towards the cost of vehicle transport, **see Sections 2.30-2.33** of this policy statement. Students on a continuing course who continue to be assessed as eligible for travel support will continue with their current travel support arrangements, unless there is a more suitable form of travel support.

2.18. The travel grant offered will be based on distance criteria from the student's home to their education setting as follows:

- Tier 1 – 0-5 miles: £1,200
- Tier 2 – 5-8 miles: £1,500
- Tier 3 – 9+ miles: £1,800

2.19. The travel grant will be paid to the student or their parent or carer termly, split into three equal payment instalments.

2.20. Southampton City Council reserves the right to withdraw the travel grant if the student does not meet attendance levels of at least 87%.

2.21. The travel grant will be reviewed annually. If Southampton City Council determines that it will increase the travel grant, the increase will be made on 1st September each year by up to, and no more than, the transport element of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Personal Travel Budgets (PTB)

2.22. Students who are assessed as being eligible for travel support may be offered a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) for the purpose of travel to and from their education setting.

2.23. The School Travel Service will assess whether it would be a suitable form of travel support based on the student's ability to provide their own transport to and from their education setting.

2.24. A PTB will only be offered where it is a more cost-effective option than a suitable alternative option (unless there are exceptional circumstances).

2.25. PTB provision will be reviewed periodically and if a more economical mode of travel support becomes available, the student will be given notice of a change to the mode of travel support, for example, eligibility for ITT.

2.26. The PTB is a mileage allowance based on the type of vehicle (standard or wheelchair accessible vehicle) used by the student or their parent or carer to transport the student to their education setting. A higher rate will be offered where a wheelchair accessible vehicle is used. Please see Southampton City Council's School Travel Service webpages at: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/search/?query=school+travel+service> or current mileage rates.

2.27. Southampton City Council may also offer an additional flexible discretionary percentage increase on the base mileage rates depending upon the circumstances for the student and will consider on an exceptional basis, for example, they may have one or more siblings for which additional financial support towards the cost of breakfast and/or after school club or other childcare would enable them to take advantage of the PTB; the education setting is outside of the city boundary; or, an additional person is required to act as a Passenger Assistant.

Provision of Vehicle Transport (Taxi, Minibus or Wheelchair)

2.28. Southampton City Council recognises that in exceptional cases for some students, access to an education setting will not be possible without the provision of vehicle transport.

2.29. This may be due to various factors, including, but not limited to, the level of SEND of the student and their family circumstances.

2.30. Where a taxi, minibus or wheelchair accessible vehicle is offered as the travel support option to a young person of sixth form age (16-18 year olds), they will be required to contribute towards the cost of the travel support per young person.

2.31. In cases where the parent carer is responsible for the contribution payment (rather than the student), and where there is equal shared custody for separated parents or carers, the local authority determines the young person's designated home address based on the address at which the recipient of the child benefit resides. If no child benefit is received, the designated home address will be determined by the address at which the young person is registered at their GP surgery. If the GP surgery address is incorrect, the designated home address will be determined by the primary next of kin contact as registered with the young person's education setting.

2.32. Where the young person or their parent or carer is in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, Universal Credit or maximum Pension Credit (with an earned income of no more than £7,400 pa), the contribution will be 25% of the full contribution per year.

2.33. The contribution per year for a young person towards vehicle transport is based on the distance from the young person's home to their education setting as follows:

- Tier 1 – 0-5 miles: £500 (means tested - £125)
- Tier 2 – 5-8 miles: £1,000 (means tested - £250)
- Tier 3 – 9+ miles: £1,500 (means tested - £375)

2.34. The consideration for the provision of vehicle transport will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

2.35. The Council cannot commit to provide vehicle transport from the start of the September term to new students attending a Post-16 education setting due to the time it takes to make vehicle transport arrangements following the notification of GCSE results at the end of August and post-16 enrolment and timetable confirmation. The Council aims to have all vehicle transport arrangements in place by the start of October and a mileage claim can be made to cover reasonable travel expenses until vehicle transport arrangements are in place.

2.36. The Council cannot commit to provide vehicle transport from the start of the September term to existing students attending a Post-16 education setting if the Council needs to procure a new transport vehicle. In such cases, the Council aims to have all vehicle transport arrangements in place by the start of October, and a mileage claim can be made to cover reasonable travel expenses until vehicle transport arrangements are in place.

Passenger Assistants

2.37. Passenger Assistants are provided in individual cases where Southampton City Council feels it is necessary to meet a student's individual needs and as identified by a risk assessment. The role of a Passenger Assistant will be to provide general supervision on a walking or vehicle transport journey and ensure that a student's journey to and from their education setting.

Privilege Places

2.38. Southampton City Council does not offer spare places known as 'privilege places' on a contract vehicle to a student who is not entitled to travel support, unless the student for whom a privilege place is requested lives at the same address as a student who is entitled to travel support and is travelling on the same vehicle. A contributory charge of £750.00 per annum, paid in three termly instalments of £250.00 per term will be charged towards the cost. Privilege places can be withdrawn if they are needed for eligible students and Southampton City Council has the discretion to remove the right of placement at any time. Southampton City Council will provide 10 days' notice of the offer withdrawal, and a pro-rata refund of fees received will be issued.

Suitable Education Provider

2.39. Students attending the nearest suitable education setting that offers their preferred course may be eligible for travel support as set out in this Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement.

2.40. A suitable education setting is taken to mean the nearest qualifying establishment with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the student, and any SEND that the student may have where they are receiving education by virtue of arrangements made under Section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996.

2.41. Qualifying education providers are:

- Community schools, special schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled with sixth form provision.
- Academies with sixth form provision (including those which are university technical colleges).
- Sixth Form Colleges.
- City technology colleges and city colleges for the technology of the art.
- Higher education institutions, such as universities.

2.42. Travel support will be provided to the nearest education setting assessed by Southampton City Council to be a suitable placement for the student, and which offers a course or programme which meets the needs of the applying student. Where a suitable course cannot be provided in Southampton, Southampton City Council will offer travel support to the nearest education setting offering the appropriate course.

Designated Home Address

2.43. The designated home address will be defined as the address at which the student resides and spends most of their time. In cases where a student has a shared living arrangement, such as equal shared custody for separated parents or carers, the local authority determines the student's designated home address based on the address at which the recipient of the child benefit resides. If no child benefit is received, the designated home address will be determined by the address at which the student is registered at their GP surgery. When the student stays at another address, they will not qualify for any travel arrangements other than those provided from the designated home address.

2.44. Where a student has no fixed abode, travel support will apply from wherever the student is residing at the relevant time.

Vehicle Transport Travel Arrangements

2.45. Where vehicle travel support (taxi, minibus, wheelchair accessible vehicle or coach) is provided as the travel support option, travel support will only be given for travel an education settings at:

- The official start and end of the education setting day or,
- Where the pupil is attending residential provision, at the start and end of their provision periods as agreed by Southampton City Council

2.46. Where a student is on a reduced timetable and requires travel support at the start and end of their scheduled hours, travel support provision will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be regularly reviewed.

2.47. Travel support will not be provided before and after education setting events, such as breakfast clubs and sports events.

2.48. Education providers are expected to give reasonable notice to Southampton City Council of any changes to provision hours. If additional costs arise associated with a change in provision hours, Southampton City Council reserves the right to make arrangements for all or part of those costs to be charged to the education provider concerned.

2.49. Travel support will be arranged to be as easy and comfortable as possible. Acknowledging that some colleges are outside of the City and that there may occasionally be transport network disruption on travel routes that is out of the council's control, Southampton City Council will aim for the journey to be as short as possible.

2.50. Changes to transport arrangements, including the Transport Operator, vehicle, Driver or Passenger Assistant, may be necessary and may be made at short notice

Vehicle Transport Pick-up/Drop-off Points

2.51. Where appropriate and reasonable, the student may be expected to meet a transport vehicle at a pick-up/drop-off point. Pick-up/drop-off points will be within 1 mile of the student's home address.

2.52. Parents or carers are responsible for the safety of their child until they board and after they exit the vehicle, unless it has been agreed in writing that the student can board and exit without the parent or carer needing to be at the pick-up or drop-off point. If the parent or carer is not at the drop-off point to meet their child, the student will be placed into the care of the duty social worker from Southampton City Council's children's social care department.

Changes of Circumstance

2.53. Students should notify the School Travel Service of any change of address, with as much notice as reasonable possible, but with a minimum of 10 working days' notice.

2.54. In the case of a change of home address, eligibility will be reassessed based on the new address.

2.55. To notify the School Travel Service of a change in circumstances, please contact the School Travel Service via email at: travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk or write to: School Travel Service, Civic Centre, Southampton, SO14 7LY.

Unacceptable Behaviour

2.56. Southampton City Council reserves the right to review travel support where a student's behaviour is deemed unacceptable, in that it may threaten the safety of the other passengers, the Driver and the Passenger Assistants, or could cause or has caused damage to a vehicle. Where travel support is removed, Southampton City Council will engage with students to provide suitable alternative travel support when it is safe to do so.

Lost, Stolen or Misused Bus Passes

- 2.57. Where a bus or other transport pass is lost, the pass holder is responsible for any administrative charges made by the bus company or other issuer. Southampton City Council will not meet the administrative charges for lost or stolen tickets. Stolen travel passes will normally not incur an administrative charge for replacement if a police crime number is provided by the student.
- 2.58. If a bus or rail pass is misused, for example, the pass is not being used by the intended person, the bus or rail pass will be withdrawn.

Adult Learning and Support

- 2.59. For information about Adult Education and Community Learning, see the following link: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/grow/people/adult-education/>.

Appeals Process

- 2.60. Students are entitled to appeal the type of travel support offered and decisions where Southampton City Council has decided not to provide travel support.
- 2.61. The appeals process is split into two stages; Stage 1 and Stage 2.
- 2.62. Stage 1 of the appeals process is a review of the decision by a senior officer(s) at Southampton City Council. A request for a review of the decision must be made within 20 working days of receiving the decision by Southampton City Council. Requests should detail why the appellant believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the student believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.
- 2.63. Stage 1 appeal requests must be submitted as follows:
- For mainstream school children whose school application was made as part of the standard mainstream school admissions application process (including exceptional circumstances applications) – via the Citizen Portal on the School Travel Webpages: **<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/support-inclusion-education/school-travel-service/appeal-a-decision/>**.
 - For applications for children placed at a school by the Council's SEND team – please request an Appeal Form by email to: **travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk**. Alternatively, an Appeal Form can be received by post: **School Travel Service, Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton. SO14 7LY.**
- 2.64. Following the review, a decision will be made, and a response will be provided in writing to the appellant within 20 working days of receiving the appeal. This will clearly explain:
- Whether the original decision is being upheld.
 - Why the decision was reached.
 - How the review was conducted.
 - The factors considered in reaching the decision.
 - Any other agencies or departments that were consulted as part of the review.
 - Information about how the appellant can escalate the case to Stage 2 of the appeals process (if appropriate).
- 2.65. Following the Stage 1 review, appellants have a further 20 working days to escalate the matter to Stage 2.

2.66. Stage 2 appeal requests must be submitted as follows:

- For mainstream school children whose school application was made as part of the standard mainstream school admissions application process (including exceptional circumstances applications) – via the Citizen Portal on the School Travel Webpages: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/support-inclusion-education/school-travel-service/appeal-a-decision/>.
- For applications for children placed at a school by the Council's SEND team – please request an Appeal Form by email to: travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk. Alternatively, an Appeal Form can be received by post: **School Travel Service, Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton. SO14 7LY.**

2.67. The appeal form asks the appellant to explain why they believe Southampton City Council should review its decision and the appellant is asked to include any information they would like to be considered as part of the review. The panel members will be independent of the original decision-making and the Stage 1 appeals process but may not be independent of Southampton City Council. Appellants may attend an appeal hearing if they wish, virtually or in person, to present their case. Where an appellant does not wish, or is unable, to attend a hearing, the panel will make its decision based on the appellant's written representations.

2.68. The Stage 2 review will take place within 40 working days of the appellant notifying Southampton City Council that they wish to escalate their appeal to Stage 2. The panel will consider information provided at Stage 1 of the appeal, any additional information provided, and any oral representations made at Stage 2.

2.69. A decision will be made and within 5 working days of the panel meeting and detailed written notification of the outcome will be provided to the appellant. This will clearly explain:

- Whether the original decision has been upheld.
- Why the decision was reached.
- How the review was conducted.
- The factors considered in reaching the decision.
- Which, if any, other agencies or departments were consulted as part of the review.

2.70. Where travel support is found to have been granted in error, 4 weeks' notice or notice to the end of the current half term will be given, whichever is the shorter period, to allow students to make other arrangements.

2.71. Where entitlement has been denied in error, travel support will be arranged as soon as possible and consideration will be given to reimbursing students retrospectively from the date of the application for travel support, with a normal time limit of the start of the academic year in question.

2.72. Students may complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman if they believe Southampton City Council has made a mistake in the way it has handled their case. If a student considers the decision of the independent appeals panel to be flawed on public law grounds, they may apply for a judicial review.

2.73. Further details about the appeals / complaints procedure are set out in **Appendix 5** of this policy.

Policy Review

2.74. The Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement will be reviewed and updated annually.

2.75. Where changes are made to the Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement that may affect a student's eligibility for travel support, it will be subject to a public consultation with:

- Education settings whose students will be affected by the proposed changes, including those located in other local authority areas.
- Parents and carers whose children will (or may) be affected by the proposed changes, including those whose students attend an education setting in a neighbouring authority, and those whose children may be affected in the future – for example, because they live in the catchment area of, or attend the feeder education setting of, an education setting affected by the proposed changes.
- The Southampton Parent Carer Forum.

2.76. The consulting period will last for at least 28 working days during term time, before any changes are agreed.

[END]

Appendix 1 – School Travel Service Eligibility Summary

Post-16 Travel Service Support Eligibility Table – Young People and Young Adults	
Who are we helping?	What are the criteria?
Young people of sixth form age; 16-18 year olds (over compulsory school age but under 19 years of age) and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) aged under 25 years where they are continuing a course started before their 19 th birthday.	Travel support will be provided for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities that have been assessed by Southampton City Council for travel support as set out in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
Young adults (i.e. those who are aged 19 or over) where they are attending a course which they started after their 19 th birthday and young adults with an EHCP for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education or training outside the further and higher education sectors where they are attending a course which they started after their 19 th birthday.	<p>Travel support will be provided for adult learners over the age of 19, but under the age of 25 who are receiving further education at an education setting, and have been assessed by Southampton City Council for travel support as set out in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).</p> <p>Where adult learners are receiving education or training outside the further and higher education sectors, the local authority's duty only applies where the local authority has secured the provision of education or training at that institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training</p>

Appendix 2 – 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.

Bursary funding is to help eligible students with costs such as travel to and from school or college or buying essential books, equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example) that are required for their study programme. These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

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
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 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 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. Students who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

The table in **Appendix 3** provides information and contact information for bursaries that can help with travel costs for education setting in and around Southampton.

Further information can be found at: www.gov.uk/ search for post-16 bursaries.

Appendix 3 – Other Post-16 Travel Support Provision

The information below was updated in February 2025 from the school and college websites. More information can be found in the bursary / financial support policies and / or the application forms for financial support on the school and college websites.

Provider	Bursary Name	Eligibility Criteria	Contact Details
South Hampshire College Group: Southampton College Eastleigh College Fareham College	16-19 Discretionary Student Support Fund	<p>You must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged 16, 17 or 18 at the start of your course. (Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive discretionary funding if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). • Studying a 'funded' course at one of the SHCG campuses. (Students studying apprenticeships are not eligible). • UK resident or meet sufficient residency criteria. <p>The Discretionary Fund is specifically designed to meet certain priority groups such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young parent. • Young carer for adult or child relative. • Young people that have suffered parental bereavement. • Students that have a significant diagnosed mental health condition. <p>This funding may also be available when the household annual income is under £29,000 and there is a proven need for financial assistance or when students experience sudden changes in circumstances such as; redundancy in the family home.</p>	<p>bursary@shcg.ac.uk</p> <p>Application form and more information: https://shcg.ac.uk/student-support/financial-support/</p> <p>www.shcg.ac.uk</p>
	16-19 Vulnerable Student Support Fund	<p>You must meet at least one of the following criteria. You must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A young person claiming Universal Credit in your own name because you are financially supporting yourself or financially supporting yourself and someone is dependent on you and living with you. • A young person who is a recent Care Leaver or in care (Local Authority confirmation will be required). • A young person who is in receipt of both Universal Credit and Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments in your own rights. 	

Provider	Bursary Name	Eligibility Criteria	Contact Details
Itchen Sixth Form College	Discretionary Support	<p>You must be aged between 16 years and under 19 years of age on 31st August at the start of the academic year.</p> <p>Support may be available for students whose parent/ guardians' household annual income is less than £32,000 or if the parent/guardian living with the student is receiving one of the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support. • Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). • the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit. • Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). • support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. • or Working Tax Credit/Universal Credit. 	<p>Itchen Sixth Form College Middle Road, Bitterne, Southampton, SO19 7TB</p> <p>Michelle Payne, Finance Support & Transport Officer</p> <p>023 8043 5636 ext. 269</p> <p>transportandifs@itchen.ac.uk</p> <p>Application form and more information: https://www.itchen.ac.uk/sixth-form/support/financial-support/ www.itchen.ac.uk</p>
	16-19 Bursary Fund	<p>You must be aged between 16 years and under 19 years of age on 31st August at the start of the academic year.</p> <p>The Bursary of is available to eligible students in any of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people in care • care leavers • young people claiming Income Support in their own name • young people claiming Universal Credit in their own name • disabled young people who receive both Employment Support Allowance and Living Allowance in their own name 	
Richard Taunton Sixth Form College	Bursary Scheme	<p>You will qualify for a bursary of up to £1,200 per year if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you are a young person in care or leaving care • you are in receipt of income support in your own right • you are a disabled young person in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance 	<p>Richard Taunton Sixth Form College Hill Lane, Southampton, SO15 5RL</p> <p>023 8029 4155</p> <p>studentservices@richardtaunton.ac.uk</p> <p>Application Form and more information:</p>
	Discretionary Bursary	<p>You may qualify for a discretionary bursary if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you can prove financial need based on household income. • you have specific travel challenges when attending the college. 	

Provider	Bursary Name	Eligibility Criteria	Contact Details
			https://www.richardtaunton.ac.uk/college-life/finances/ www.richardtaunton.ac.uk/
Bitterne Park Sixth Form	Vulnerable Bursary	<p>The 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary is up to £1200.</p> <p>The Vulnerable Bursary is available to eligible students in any of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student in care. • A care leaver. • A student claiming income support. • A student claiming Universal Credit. • A disabled young person in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. 	<p>https://www.richardtaunton.ac.uk/</p> <p>Bitterne Park Sixth Form College Dimond Road, Southampton, SO18 1BU</p> <p>023 8029 4155</p> <p>info@bitterneparksixthform.org.uk</p> <p>Application form and more information: https://www.itchen.ac.uk/sixth-form/support/financial-support/</p> <p>www.bitterneparksixthform.org.uk</p>
	Discretionary Bursary	<p>The Discretionary Bursary is available to eligible students in any of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student living in a household where the joint income is less than £25,000 (or living independently on an income below this level). • A student In receipt of an income assessed benefit such as: Income Support; Universal Credit; Job Seeker's Allowance; Working/Child Tax Credit; Housing Benefit. • A student facing exceptional financial circumstances. 	<p>https://www.itchen.ac.uk/sixth-form/support/financial-support/</p> <p>www.bitterneparksixthform.org.uk</p>
St Vincent College	Travel Help	<p>St Vincent College seeks to help students from lower household incomes (HHI) with the cost of going to college The college can provide the following travel financial support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discounted bus pass. • Refund ferry tickets. • Travel cost to work placement. <p>If you are 16–18 years old and under Local Authority Care/are a Care Leaver, or living independently, or receive Disabled Support Allowance/PIP and Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit, you may be eligible to a</p>	<p>St Vincent College Mill Lane, Gosport, PO12 4AQ</p> <p>023 9258 8311</p> <p>bursary@lighthouselearningtrust.ac.uk</p> <p>Application form and more information: https://www.stvincent.ac.uk/sixth-form/information-for-</p>

Provider	Bursary Name	Eligibility Criteria	Contact Details
		<p>higher-level bursary. Please note the cost of the bus pass and the daily use of the lunch card will be deducted every term.</p> <p>Application form and criteria: https://www.stvincent.ac.uk/sixth-form/information-for-students/information-for-students-2/</p>	<p>students/information-for-students-2/ www.stvincent.ac.uk</p>
<p>Barton Peveril Sixth Form College</p>	<p>16-19 Student Support Fund</p>	<p>The 16-19 Bursary (section 6 of the application form) offers support for students who are in one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently in care. • Care leaver. • You are financially supporting yourself and receive Income Support, Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance in your own name. • You receive PIP (Personal Independence Payments) alongside Universal Credit, both in your own name. 	<p>Barton Peveril College Chestnut Avenue, Eastleigh, SO50 5ZA</p> <p>023 8036 7214</p> <p>studentfinance@barton.ac.uk</p> <p>Application form and more information: https://barton-peveril.ac.uk/college-life-introduction/student-financial-help/</p> <p>www.barton-peveril.ac.uk</p>
<p>Brockenhurst College</p>	<p>Vulnerable Bursary</p>	<p>To qualify for the Vulnerable Bursary, you must meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 16, but under 19 on August 31. • In care – i.e. children who are voluntarily looked after by a local authority (under section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (under section 31 of the Children Act 1989). Or care leaver – i.e. a young person aged 16 or 17 who were previously looked after for a continuous period of 13 weeks (or multiple periods totalling 13 weeks), starting after the age of 14 and ending after the age of 16; or a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after for a continuous period of 13 weeks (or multiple periods totalling 13 weeks) prior to turning 18, starting after the age of 14 and ending after the age of 16. • Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in your own name, while financially supporting yourself or supporting yourself and a dependant living with you. 	<p>Brockenhurst College Lyndhurst Road, Brockenhurst, Hampshire, SO42 7ZE</p> <p>01590 625 555</p> <p>bursary@brock.ac.uk</p> <p>Application form and more information: https://www.brock.ac.uk/sixth-form/support-and-bursaries/</p> <p>www.brock.ac.uk</p>

Provider	Bursary Name	Eligibility Criteria	Contact Details
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Or, receiving Disability Living Allowance or a Personal Independence Payment in your own name, along with Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in your own name. If you are in receipt of Universal Credit, you must provide proof using documents such as a tenancy agreement in your name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates and utility bills. 	
	Discretionary Bursary	<p>To qualify for the Discretionary Bursary, you must meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must have lived in the UK for at least three years before starting your studies. • You must be over 16, but under 19 on August 31. <p>The Discretionary Bursary is also available to you if you are 19 or older and have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). In addition, it is available to you if you are aged 19 or older and are continuing a Study Programme they started between the ages of 16 and 18.</p> <p>You must live in a household whose take home pay is less than £35,000 per year. This means take-home pay of less than £2,916 per month. Importantly, we do not include any benefit payments in our calculation.</p>	
	19+ Bursary	<p>To qualify for the 19+ Bursary, you must meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have lived in the UK for at least three years before starting your studies. • You are 19 years old or older on August 31. • You live in a household whose take home pay is less than £30,000 per year. This means you (and your partner) must have take-home pay of less than £2,500 a month. Importantly, we do not include any benefit payments in our calculation. If you live with a parent, we do not include their income. <p>Please note that students enrolled on apprenticeships and Higher Education courses are not eligible to apply for this bursary.</p>	
Sparsholt College	16-18 Bursary Fund	If you're 16–18 and in care, a care leaver, or are in receipt of Income Support and support yourself or any dependents financially or receive both Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA), you may be eligible for a bursary to help you meet the costs of coming to college.	Sparsholt College Hampshire Westley Lane Sparsholt

Provider	Bursary Name	Eligibility Criteria	Contact Details
	Discretionary Fund	<p>Sparsholt provide a discretionary fund for learners that do not meet the criteria for the 16-18 Bursary Fund or are aged over 19.</p> <p>If your household income is under £32,960 the College's Support to Study Bursary may be able to help. If your household income is under £35,000 the College's Support to Study Bursary may be able to help with the costs of travel, books, equipment or any other cost which may make it difficult for you to attend college.</p> <p>You could receive up to 70% off transport costs, as well as being able to pay the remaining balance on a monthly basis.</p> <p>If your household income is under £28,000 you may be eligible for the transport cost to be fully covered by the fund. The income threshold of £35,000 is increased by £1,650 for each dependent child living in the same house as the bursary applicant.</p>	<p>Winchester SO21 2NF</p> <p>01962 797 267</p> <p>studentfunding@sparsholt.ac.uk</p> <p>Application form and more information: https://www.sparsholt.ac.uk/the-college/fees-and-funding/</p> <p>www.sparsholt.ac.uk</p>
Totton College	Vulnerable Bursary	<p>Please contact the College directly.</p> <p>Bursaries are available for under 19-year old's and offer various of levels of finance support.</p> <p>If you are aged 16-18 and in one of the groups below, you can apply for a vulnerable bursary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In care. • Care leavers receiving Income Support or Universal Credit, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, and Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right. 	<p>Totton College Water Lane, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 3ZX</p> <p>02380 874 874</p> <p>info@totton.ac.uk</p> <p>Application form and more information: https://www.totton.ac.uk/life-at-totton-college/student-support/help-with-funding-and-financial-support/#:~:text=The%20Bursary%20Fund%20at%20Totton,university%20interviews%20and%20open%20days.</p> <p>www.totton.ac.uk</p>
	Discretionary Bursary	Open to students who need financial support but do not qualify under the Vulnerable category. Assessment is based on household income and benefits.	

Provider	Bursary Name	Eligibility Criteria	Contact Details
Bluestar Bus		<p>Students can receive discounted travel if they are aged 16-19.</p> <p>Colleges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bitterne Park Sixth Form • Itchen Sixth Form College • Richard Taunton Sixth Form College • Southampton College • Totton College • St Anne's Catholic Sixth Form Barton Peveril Sixth Form College • King Edward VI School • Peter Symonds College • Brockenhurst College • Eastleigh College 	<p>01202 338421</p> <p>https://www.bluestarbus.co.uk/college-tickets</p>
Southampton City Council	Concessionary bus pass	<p>Southampton residents over 5 years of age who have a long-term eligible disability can apply for an off-peak travel concessionary bus pass.</p> <p>If you are registered as severely sight-impaired, you will be entitled to free bus travel at any time within Southampton.</p> <p>If you are unable to travel alone, you may qualify for a companion bus pass. This will allow one carer to travel with you free of charge on journeys within the city boundary.</p> <p>For travel information regarding wheelchairs and power chairs, please see the appropriate bus company website accessibility pages.</p>	<p>Southampton City Council Civic Centre, Southampton, SO14 7LY</p> <p>023 8083 3008</p> <p>smartcities@southampton.gov.uk</p> <p>More information: http://www.southampton.gov.uk/travel-transport/apply-pay/itchen-bridge/smartcities/travel-disabled.aspx</p>

Appendix 4 – 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

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 they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to.
 - living apart from you and your child
- 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
- 35 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>.

Appendix 5 – School Travel Service Appeals and Complaints Procedure

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Southampton City Council has adopted the process recommended by the Government's statutory guidance for home to school travel should parents, carers or post-16 students wish to appeal a travel application outcome which includes a two-stage process:
 - Stage 1: review of a decision by Southampton City Council for travel support by two Senior Officers, and where this has not resolved the matter,
 - Stage 2: appeal against a decision where an appeal hearing will be held by an independent Appeals Panel
- 1.2 This document details Southampton City Council's procedure for school and post-16 travel support appeals and complaints.

2.0 Right of Appeal

- 2.1 Parents, carers and post-16 students with concerns about Southampton City Council's decision on their travel support application are entitled to request that the decision is reviewed, and where this has not resolved the matter, to appeal against a decision.
- 2.2 Appeals may relate to:
 - the travel arrangements offered
 - a child or student's eligibility
 - the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances
 - the safety of the route
- 2.3 Common concerns include, but are not limited to:
 - the child/post-16 student's eligibility
 - the transport arrangements offered
 - the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances
 - unsuitability (safety) of the route to school / an education setting
 - financial concerns
 - ill health/disability of the parent, carer or child / post-16 student
 - administrative errors and application of the law
- 2.4 Parents, carers or post-16 students may not request a review or appeal on the grounds that they disagree with the road safety assessment undertaken by a qualified road safety officer. However, they may appeal if they consider there are exceptional personal circumstances that need to be taken into consideration by Southampton City Council.
- 2.5 The review can only consider whether the relevant policies have been applied appropriately.
- 2.6 The process that must be followed is set out in this document.

3.0 Appeal Panel

- 3.1 Stage 1 reviews are undertaken by two Southampton City Council Senior Officers representing the School Travel Service and either the Education and Admissions Service or the SEND Service and will be independent of the original decision-making process.
- 3.2 Stage 2 appeals are heard by an independent Appeal Review Panel and will be independent of the original decision-making process and the Stage 1 review. The panel will be suitably experienced (at the discretion of Southampton City Council), to ensure a balance is achieved between meeting the needs of the parents, carers and post-16 students and Southampton City Council, and that road safety

requirements are complied with, and no child or student is placed at unnecessary risk.

4.0 Stage 1 – Review of the Decision

- 4.1 A parent, carer or post-16 student has 20 working days from receipt of the Southampton City Council's travel support decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision by completing a Stage 1 Appeal Application Form.
- 4.2 The appeal should detail why the parent, carer or post-16 student believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent, carer or post-16 student believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.
- 4.3 Supporting evidence can be provided as appropriate.
- 4.4 Appeals must be submitted as follows:
 - For mainstream school children whose school application was made as part of the standard mainstream school admissions application process (including exceptional circumstances applications) – via the Citizen Portal on the School Travel Webpages:
<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/support-inclusion-education/school-travel-service/appeal-a-decision/>.
 - For applications for children placed at a school, college or other education setting by the Council's SEND team – please request an Appeal Form by email to: travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk. Alternatively, an Appeal Form can be requested by post: **School Travel Service, Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton. SO14 7LY.**
- 4.5 A review of the decision on travel support will be undertaken, together with consideration of any information and supporting evidence received with the written request.
- 4.6 The Appeal Review Panel will review the original decision and provide a written Stage 1 response within 20 working days of receipt of the Stage 1 written request.
- 4.7 The response will include detailed information about the outcome of their review, setting out:
 - whether the original decision is being upheld
 - why the decision was reached
 - how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g., Road Safety GB)
 - information about other services and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process
 - what factors were considered
 - information about how the parent, care or post-16 student can escalate their case to Stage 2 (if appropriate)

5.0 Stage 2 – Appeal of the Stage 1 Decision

- 5.1 A parent, carer or post-16 student has 20 working days from receipt of Southampton City Council's Stage 1 written decision notification to escalate the matter to Stage 2.
- 5.2 Appeals must be submitted as follows:
 - For mainstream school children whose school application was made as part of the standard mainstream school admissions application process (including exceptional circumstances applications) – via the Citizen Portal on the School Travel Webpages:
<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/support-inclusion-education/school-travel-service/appeal-a-decision/>.
 - For applications for children placed at a school, college or other education setting by the Council's SEND team: please request an Appeal Form by

email to: travel.coordination@southampton.gov.uk. Alternatively, an Appeal Form can be requested by post: **School Travel Service, Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton. SO14 7LY.**

- 5.3 Supporting evidence can be provided as appropriate.
- 5.4 Appeal applications will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days of receipt.
- 5.5 Within 40 working days of receipt of the appeal application, an independent Hearing Appeal Panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the Appellant and Officers involved in the case.
- 5.6 The Appellant will be invited to present their appeal case to the Hearing Appeal Panel at a formal appeal hearing.
- 5.7 Appeal hearings will be held during the normal working day only.
- 5.8 Appellants unable to attend the appeal hearing can send a friend, relative, or other representative to attend on their behalf but must notify Southampton City Council in advance of the appeal hearing.
- 5.9 Legal representation is not permitted.
- 5.10 Further correspondence will be issued, which will include a date and time for the appeal hearing.
- 5.11 At least 5 days prior to the appeal hearing, Appellants and the Southampton City Council's Hearing Appeal Panel will receive a copy of the case papers and any supporting documentation for consideration at the appeal hearing.
- 5.12 The Hearing Appeal Panel Chair will provide a detailed written notification of the outcome to the Appellant (within 5 working days), setting out:
 - whether the original decision is being upheld
 - why the decision was reached
 - how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g., Road Safety GB)
 - information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process
 - what factors were considered
 - information about the right to put the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (see below)
- 5.13 The Hearing Appeal Panel will consider an appeal based on the information received in writing if an Appellant cannot attend the appeal hearing or send a representative.

6.0 Appeal Hearing Procedure

- 6.1 The Hearing Appeal Panel will comprise three to five members, one of which will Chair the appeal hearing.
- 6.2 A Presenting Officer will attend the appeal hearing to present the case for the travel support decision.
- 6.3 A note taker will attend the appeal hearing to make a record of the meeting.
- 6.4 At the start of the appeal hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Appeal Panel will introduce all attendees and will explain the procedure before continuing.
- 6.5 The Hearing Appeal Panel may ask anyone questions at any time or may alter the order at any time.
- 6.6 The appeal hearing procedure is as follows:
 - 1) The Presenting Officer will explain the reasons for the travel support decision.
 - 2) The Hearing Appeal Panel may ask the Presenting Officer questions.
 - 3) The Appellant/Representative may ask the Presenting Officer questions.
 - 4) The Appellant/Representative will explain the grounds of the appeal and its desired outcome.
 - 5) The Hearing Appeal Panel may ask the Appellant/Representative questions.

- 6) The Presenting Officer may ask the Appellant/Representative questions.
 - 7) The Presenting Officer will be asked to summarise their case.
 - 8) The Appellant/Representative will be asked to summarise the grounds of their appeal.
 - 9) The Appellant/Representative and the Presenting Officer will be asked to leave the room, and the Hearing Appeal Panel will make its decision.
- 6.7 In reaching their decision the Appeals Panel:
- may agree to consider only written evidence for either or both parties
 - must have regard to Southampton City Council's School Travel Service Policy and Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement
 - will begin by reviewing the application of Southampton City Council's School Travel Service Policy and Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement to ensure compliance with published arrangements
 - has a responsibility to consider the most cost-effective travel solutions to ensure an efficient use of public funds
- 6.8 The outcome of the Hearing Appeal Panel will be one of the following:
- uphold the appeal
 - decline the appeal
 - partially uphold the appeal. This can include meeting the appellant's wishes in part or for a time-limited period. At the end of the time-limited period, the Hearing Appeal Panel can reconsider the circumstances and may request additional information, for example up to date medical records or school / education setting attendance records
- 6.9 Following the Stage 2 outcome, there is no further opportunity to appeal the travel support decision with Southampton City Council.
- 6.10 For cases that have been upheld by the Hearing Appeal Panel, arrangements for the agreed level of travel support will be made as soon as reasonably practical.

7.0 Local Government Ombudsman

- 7.1 If an appellant considers that there has been a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way an appeal was handled, they may have a right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 7.2 The Ombudsman cannot question a local authority's decision if it has been made properly and fairly.
- 7.3 The Ombudsman will not normally consider a complaint until the two-stage review and appeals process has concluded.
- 7.4 An appellant can find out how to make a complaint to the Ombudsman at: www.lgo.org.uk.
- 7.5 Further information is published online by the Local Government Ombudsman at: <http://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/education/school-transport>

8.0 Repeat Applications

- 8.1 Once a decision on an application has been made, including any review or appeal decisions, further applications for assisted travel in relation to the same child at the same school / education setting cannot be accepted. The exception to this is where Southampton City Council, or body appointed, is satisfied that there has been a significant and material change in circumstances since the original application was considered.
- 8.2 Where Southampton City Council determines a change to its School Travel Policy or Post-16 Travel Service Policy Statement, parents, carers, and post-16 students affected by the change can apply for a review and appeal in accordance with the arrangements set out in this procedure.

9.0 Complaints

- 9.1 Complaints about service delivery shall be made in accordance with the Southampton City Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. Complaints will not be accepted if simply seeking to challenge the decision following the review and appeal process set out above (in respect of which the appeal panel decision is binding and outside the scope of the Southampton City Council's Complaints Policy).
- 9.2 Complaints about Southampton City Council's School Travel Service (rather than an appeal outcome) can be made via the website at:
<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/council-democracy/have-your-say/comments-complaints/complaints/>.