



Post 16 Education Transport Policy

**THIS POLICY SUPERCEDES ALL PREVIOUS POLICIES AND APPLIES ONLY
TO THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20**

OFFICIAL

1. Background to this policy

This document outlines the Brighter Future for Children (the Company)'s Policy for providing assistance with education transport for young people aged 16-18 in further education, continuing learners aged up to 19 and those young people aged 19-24 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

This policy is not a definitive statement of the law but takes into account legislation, relevant guidance, regulations, recommended practice and the Company's own experience. Transport to and from school is provided in accordance with various statutory provisions such as the Education Act 1996, as amended by subsequent enactment and the Equality Duty pursuant to the Equality Act 2010.

This Policy may be changed in the light of changes in legislation and other such circumstances. In considering the date of implementation of any future change, the Company will consider the effect on students whose school or college attendance or travel arrangements were made in good faith in the light of this or previous policies. However, the Company reserves the right to implement any change of policy before the end of the school or college career of any particular child or young person.

Throughout this Policy we use the term *parent* to mean one or both parents and to include the young person's main carer(s). We use the term 'assistance' in this Policy because in some cases Reading may meet only a part of the cost. It still remains the responsibility of parents in all circumstances to ensure their young person attend school or college.

The Policy is in two parts:

Part One – the Policy for mainstream learners in post 16 school, college training and work placements.

Part Two – the Policy for learners with special educational needs and disabilities.

PART ONE:

TRANSPORT POLICY FOR MAINSTREAM POST 16 SCHOOL and COLLEGE, TRAINING OR WORK PLACEMENTS

1. The Policy

It is the policy of Brighter Futures for Children not to provide transport assistance for young people who continue education, training or workplace learning.

Families who experience financial difficulties should contact the school/further education establishment who may be able to provide assistance through their bursary funding scheme.

The only exceptions to this may be for certain learners with special educational needs or disabilities, in certain circumstances (please see Part Two).

2. Brighter Futures for Children's Approach

Whilst Brighter Futures for Children is committed to supporting Post 16 education, the Company does not have a statutory duty to offer transport for a student Post 16. **There is no automatic entitlement to assistance for school or college transport once learners are over the age of 16.**

However, to benefit learners, preferential rates of travel are available from some rail and bus operators, such as Reading Buses. The parent/young person should contact the relevant transport provider to purchase tickets.

Certain colleges such as the Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) provide buses from Reading to the college. There is a charge. For further information, please contact the respective college.

Information about Bursary Funding which may be available to students should be sought from the educational establishment attended. Parents and carers should ensure that they are aware of the cost of transport and take this into account when making choices regarding Post 16 education.

PART TWO: TRANSPORT PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

1. Key Contact Numbers

School Transport Service

Civic Centre
Bridge Street
Reading RG1 2LU
0118 937 2542
School.Transport@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

2. The Company's Approach

It is the policy of Brighter Futures for Children to provide transport assistance for certain young people (post 16) with special educational needs or disabilities who continue education, training or workplace learning.

3. General Entitlement

There is no automatic entitlement to assisted transport once a student is over the age of 16. However, cases will be decided on an individual basis and the Authority will consider any supporting evidence provided as part of a request together with a completed transport application form.

If eligible, transport will only be provided to the nearest education and /or training provider for learners and subject to funding in relation to the published eligibility criteria outlined below.

Assistance with transport will not be provided if it is deemed that suitable provision is available at a closer learning provider as measured from the home address.

The “nearest suitable” learning provider is the closest school or college to the home address able to meet the young person’s educational needs. If parents choose to send their young person or the young person chooses to attend a school or college which is not the “nearest suitable”, assistance with transport will not be provided by the Company. These distances are measured by the nearest available walking route, and verified by the Company or its agents, by appropriate means which might include the use of computer generated mapping systems. The Company views these distances as an exact measure and they cannot be considered as marginal. The measurements are taken from the entrance to the home to the main entrance of the learning provider.

The Company provides independent travel training schemes to enable young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to travel on public transport independently and safely. Information on this can be accessed through the school/college or through the School Transport Services. Assistance is normally only provided for the standard school or college day and to one site or educational establishment destination.

4 Eligibility Criteria

4.1 Eligibility for School Transport

To qualify for consideration for school transport young people must:

- be resident within Reading;
- be aged 16 to 19 (i.e. within Year groups 12 to 14);
- attend a school, including Special Schools and Academies;
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Young people are expected to make use of public transport wherever possible and travel training is available.

Applicants will be required to provide relevant documents to prove their eligibility to assistance with transport. Other documents may be required and details should be obtained from the School Transport Service before applying.

4.2 Reduced Cost Public Transport

There are reduced cost passes available for young people aged 16 to 25 if they are attending one of the following:

- a further education institution;
- an Authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education;
- a learning provider that is funded by the Local Authority which leads to a positive outcome (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers);
- a 6th form placement in a school.

5. Choosing a School

For young people meeting the eligibility criteria, the Company will only provide assistance with transport costs to the nearest school considered by the Local Authority to be able to meet the students identified needs. This may not be their choice of preferred school.

Assistance with transport will not be provided if it is deemed that suitable provision is available at a closer placement as measured from the home address.

In cases where a parent wishes to choose a different school, discounted or discretionary fares with some public transport providers may be available through the School Transport Service or direct from the public transport providers.

If a College of Further Education or equivalent is chosen, an application can be made directly to the education provider's Bursary Fund which is available for low income families (details of which can be obtained from the provider).

6. Transport Requests

Applications must be made annually and will be reviewed to assess whether or not assistance with transport is still required. In cases where it is not clear if the appropriate criteria are fully met, an appeal can be made through the published appeals process.

There is no guarantee that any transport provided will be the same as when the learner attended school in Year 11 and every encouragement will be made towards independent travel by public transport.

7. Bus Passes and College Transport

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. There is a charge. For further information please contact the respective college.

8. No Transport Provision

Transport will NOT normally be provided in the following circumstances:

- if the student does not fulfil the criteria;
- if there is a change of address following issue of a final Education, Health and Care Plan;
- if the parent/carer request a place that is not the nearest appropriate establishment at which a place is available;
- for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan where the parents have agreed to make provision for transport;
- for after school clubs or school trips;
- for work experience placements or other extra curricular activities;
- for dental or hospital appointments;
- for clinical, medical or non-educational appointments;
- in the event of detention and/or exclusions;
- to attend meetings following exclusion;
- to attend open days and 'taster sessions' at a setting;
- following continued inappropriate behaviour occurring on transport;
- in the event that a young person is unwell.

It is the parents' responsibility to provide transport on these occasions.

9. Individual Requirements

9.1 Pupil's Home Address

Transport to and from school will normally be determined from a single permanent residence. This is normally the address where the young person spends most time with the parent/carer and has been used for admission purposes. The Company must be notified in writing of all changes of home address.

9.2 Change of Address

If there is a change of address for a student then parents must inform the School Transport Service immediately. If necessary the School Transport Service will reassess the pupil's entitlement to transport. Proof of residency will be required to ensure the correct entitlement for the pupil.

Please note that a change of address does not mean an entitlement to transport, although in exceptional cases, the Company may consider that continuing attendance at the current setting to be in the young person's best interest. In such

cases transport will be considered to ensure attendance. Consideration will also be given as to whether the change of address was entirely outside any parental control. This decision is at the discretion of the Company.

Where the change of address affects the designation of the nearest suitable school or college named in Section I in an Education, Health and Care Plan and parents choose to continue the current placement, parents will be responsible for making suitable transport arrangements and the Plan will be amended.

9.3 Moving Into Reading Borough

Families moving into Reading Borough will be subject to the criteria as outlined in Section 9.2.

9.4 Siblings

Siblings of young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan do not have an entitlement to school transport as a result. If the Policy has changed since any older sibling received assistance with transport, then the younger sibling will be subject to the Policy in force at the time of the latter's application and anticipated start date.

9.5 Medical Conditions

If a student 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.

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 require the young person to be examined by its own medical adviser and may choose to seek comment from the educational institution or school attended by the child or young person. In an exceptional case the Company may choose to substitute the advice from its own adviser for that submitted by a parent.

Provision of the assistance will be reviewed from time to time as appropriate.

- Example of a short term medical condition – broken leg.
- Example of a long term medical condition – brittle bone disease.

10 Parents' Disabilities

Assistance is not normally provided for a young person in respect of the disability of either or both of his or her parents. However, each application will be considered on its own merits at the discretion of the Company and in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

11. General Requirements for Parents / Carers and Young People Using Transport

11.1 Behaviour on Transport

Parents, schools, students, transport contractors and the Company, working in partnership, all share responsibility for ensuring that acceptable behaviour is maintained to ensure safe and stress-free transport for all.

The provision of transport maybe withdrawn either for a period of time or permanently should a student misbehave whilst being transported to or from school. Normally a warning letter will be sent to parents/carers prior to transport being withdrawn. However, in the event that any incident is considered serious enough, following an investigation by the School Transport Service, the withdrawal of transport may be immediate. In this instance the responsibility for ensuring attendance at school will remain with the parent/carer of the student.

11.2 Emergency Contact Details

Parents/carers need to provide contact telephone numbers, including alternative numbers in the event of the operator or Company being unable to contact the parent/carer before transport can be provided.

12. 19-24 Provision

Application for assistance should be made through the Social Worker or Social Care department. Funding would come through support payments.

13. Apprenticeships

Applications should be made through the employer.

14. Decisions, Reviewing of Decisions, Complaints and Appeals

14.1 Decisions

Decisions as to the eligibility for transport, the mode of transport, and other practical matters of transport for students with Education, Health and Care Plans will be taken by the Company's Education Officers with particular authorisation to do so.

14.2 Appeals Process

Informal

If a parent is unhappy with a decision that has been made, we recommend in the first instance that this is raised with the Education Officer that has made the decision.

Formal Process

The appeal process is fully outlined in the main School Transport Policy.

Local Government Ombudsman

A parent/carer who remains dissatisfied after following this procedure may further complain to the Local Government Ombudsman, but only if complainants consider that there was a failure to comply with procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal was handled. If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may apply to judicial review. The Ombudsman can be contacted at:

PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH (tel. 0845 602 1983)

Further information is available on the Ombudsman's website: www.lgo.org.uk

14.3 Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

Where the student in question holds an Education, Health and Care Plan, it may be that a disagreement about transport is part of a wider question of school provision and placement. As mentioned elsewhere in this Policy, in such an instance, it may be necessary for the matter to be considered by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.

Please note that the tribunal does not hear appeals specifically about transport, although it may consider it as part of a wider appeal regarding placement. Officers of the Special Educational Needs Team will discuss the appropriate means of appeal in each case as necessary.

Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal

1st Floor, Darlington Magistrates' Court

Parkgate, Darlington

DL1 1RU

Telephone: 01325 289350

Fax: 0870 739 4017

Send@justice.gov.uk

14.4 Corporate Complaints Policy

Parents can also follow the Company's Complaints Procedure by contacting:

Customer Relations Team

Reading Borough Council

Civic Offices

Bridge Street

Reading

RG1 2LU

Tel: 0118 937 2905

E-mail: customer.relations@reading.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/complaintorcomment>

USEFUL CONTACTS

Adviza (formerly Connexions)

Adviza is a charity that aims to help people to make better decisions that help them to progress in learning and work

Tel: 0845 408 5001

Email: info@adviza.org.uk

Berkshire College of Agriculture

The college operates their own bus service to the college and students can purchase passes directly from the college.

Tel: 01628 827482

Email: enquiries@bca.ac.uk

Bracknell and Wokingham College

Further Education College

Tel: 0845 330 3343

Email: study@bracknell.ac.uk

Newbury College

Monks Lane

Newbury

RG14 7TD

01635 845312

Info@newbury-college.ac.uk

Henley College

Further Education College

Tel: 01491 579988

Email: info@henleycol.ac.uk

Reading College

Further Education College

0800 371434

<http://www.reading-college.ac.uk/>

Reading Buses

Reading Transport Ltd.

Great Knolly's Street

Reading RG1 7HH

Tel. 0118 959 4000

Email: info@reading-buses.co.uk

Web: www.reading-buses.co.uk

Horsemans Coaches

2 Acre Road

Reading RG2 0SU

Tel: 0118 975 3811

Email: Buspasses@horsemancoaches.co.uk

Web: www.horsemancoaches.co.uk

Rail

16-25 Railcard

Tel: 08448 714036

Web: www.16-25railcard.co.uk

National Rail Enquiries

Tel: 0845 748 4950

Web: www.nationalrail.co.uk