

Consultation on proposed changes to Post 16 Transport Statement

Information pack

29 January – 13 March 2024



Introduction

The Isle of Wight Council is seeking residents' and stakeholders' views on proposed changes to the Post 16 Transport Statement (the Policy). The DfE guidance requires the Council to prepare and publish an annual Post 16 Transport Statement (the Policy) specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport person of sixth form age in education or training. The policy must be determined and published by 31 May each year.

The Isle of Wight Council and its Post 16 providers are committed to ensuring transport is available to enable students to access education and training as set out in the policy statement. The support is provided either by the Isle of Wight Council or further education and training providers.

If approved, changes to the Policy will be applied to new applications for transport from September 2024.

The consultation is open from Monday 29 January 2024 and closes at 11:59pm on Wednesday 13 March 2023.

Background and context

There is no automatic entitlement to local authority funded school or college transport once a student is over the age of 16. The Isle of Wight Council has considered its resources and the travel to college opportunities for students. Students can attend a college or school of choice and, if needed, apply to their provider's student support for assistance.

The Isle of Wight Council does offer, under discretionary power, a transport service to enable Post 16 students with a Learning Difficulty or Disability (usually with an Education, Health and Care Plan) to access a place that is the closest suitable provision for their needs.

Students from low-income families, in care or care leavers may be eligible for a yearly bursary the 16-19 Bursary Fund from the Education Funding Agency. Students and families apply for the bursary directly through their chosen college or Post 16 provider.

The Isle of Wight College, school sixth forms and Post 16 training providers also provide travel information for learners. Southern Vectis bus company provide a variety of reduced fare options.

The Isle of Wight Council wishes to consult on the proposal to introduce a parental contribution for those students who qualify for transport assistance. Costs of arranging transport have increased over the past few years as the demand for school transport has increased, and the costs of transport arrangements have also risen. The Council continues to work to deliver value for money in its services.

In addition, the Council proposes updating its Post 16 Transport Statement to reflect current government policy and simplify the information presented in it.

Please Note: References to "parent" in this document include birth parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, carers or legal guardians with parental responsibility.

Why your views are important

It is important to the Council that the views of parents, children and young people who may be affected by the proposals are carefully considered to ensure that the service continues to meet the needs of its users. Feedback is also sought from island residents and other interested stakeholders.

The findings of the consultation will be shared with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions and presented to the Isle of Wight Council Cabinet in 2024. Feedback will help to inform any decision by the Council on the proposed changes to the Post 16 Transport Policy and how transport assistance is delivered.

How to have your say

Open Public Consultation

You are invited to give your views on the proposed changes to the School Transport policy. You can do this by using the online response form at www.iow.gov.uk/schools-and-education/home-to-school-transport/school-transport-consultations/. The Information Pack and Response Form are also available to download and print from the consultation webpage.

If you require a paper copy of the Information Pack or the Response Form or if you have any queries about the consultation, please email transport.info@iow.gov.uk with 'School Transport Policy consultation 2024' as the subject, or call: 01983 823780.

The consultation is open from Monday 29 January 2024 and closes at 11:59pm on Wednesday 13 March 2024. Please note that responses received after this date will not be considered as part of the consultation.

Your data: Privacy Notice

The Isle of Wight Council is seeking your views, comments, and information about you in order to inform a decision on proposed changes to the Policy for school transport on the Isle of Wight. This information is being collected for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest in the exercise of official authority vested in the Council.

Responses will be used to understand what people think about, and the perceived impact of the potential changes to the Policy for School Transport on the Isle of Wight, and to look at the views of different groups within the Isle of Wight. All data will remain within the UK/EEA and will only be shared with third parties where they are undertaking data processing on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council. Personal information will be held securely for one year, after which it will be deleted or destroyed.

You have some legal rights in respect of the personal information we collect from you. [Please see our website Data Protection page](#) for further details.

You can contact the Council's Data Protection Officer at dpo@iow.gov.uk. If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, you should raise your concern with us in the first instance or directly to the Information Commissioner's Office.

About the School Transport Service

The Council currently arranges transport for around 151 Post 16 students, whom all have an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP). The Council currently funds all Post 16 transport for these pupils whilst there is no statutory requirement to do so. The proposals would see parental contribution bridge the gap between the full cost of providing the service.

Totals costs for Post 16 transport in 2022/23 financial year were just over £763K based on 151 students travelling, which on average is just over £5k per student. It is forecasted that the Post 16 transport provision is expected to reach just over £845K for 2023/24 financial year.

Information on the Post 16 Transport Statement, eligibility criteria, and the application process is available at: www.iow.gov.uk/schooltransport.

The proposals in this consultation

The following changes are being proposed:

- **Proposal One:** Introduction of an annual parental contribution, with inflation-linked increases also being applied in future years.
- **Proposal Two:** The rewording and updating of the Council's policy to ensure it reflects the latest Department for Education statutory guidance.
- **Proposal Three:** Introduction of Personal Transport Budgets (PTB) to be available to families where a child or young person's needs or circumstances mean that suitable transport is difficult to find, or not available at all, in the local operator market.

Proposal One: Introduction of an annual parental contribution, with inflation-linked increases also being applied in future years

What is the current situation?

The Council currently arranges transport for around 151 Post 16 students, whom all have an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP). The Council currently funds all Post 16 transport for these pupils whilst there is no statutory requirement to do so.

What is being proposed?

The Council wishes to consider two proposals which are based on a flat rate charge or a mileage distance parental contribution.

Option 1

The Council proposes to introduce a parental contribution of £570 per academic year (11% of the annual unit cost (£5,186) and future increases linked to inflation. The proposed contributions have been benchmarked with other local authorities and fall into the lower sector of charges.

Option 2

The Council proposes a parental contribution based on a mileage banding approach and annual increases linked to CPI. This proposal will see four mileage bands as detailed below:

Distance to travel	Annual proposed academic charge
Up to 5 miles	£640
5.01 miles to 7.5 miles	£887
7.51 miles to 10 miles	£1,242
Over 10 miles	£1,419
	TOTAL

Part of the proposals is to waive parental contribution costs for both options for those families who are on low income, in receipt of certain benefits or if the student is in receipt of free school meals. Furthermore, those families with a low income but not in receipt of certain benefit and can evidence that the imposition of the charge would reduce their income to below the stated threshold, may apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in charge.

The Council would offer the facility to pay parental contribution in instalments on a termly or half termly basis.

Why is this being proposed?

The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide funded transport for Post 16 students. Other local authorities such as Hampshire, Essex, Devon and West Berkshire apply a charge for organising transport for these students. A benchmarking exercise of 75 local authorities showed that parent contribution rates varied between £370 - £1,554.

This proposed change would bring the Council's School Transport Policy in line with local authorities.

Costs of arranging transport have increased over the past few years as the demand for school transport has increased, and the costs of transport arrangements have also risen. The Council continues to work to deliver value for money in its services and this proposed change will enable the Council to recover a small percentage of costs against a discretionary arrangement which we currently fully fund.

How would this be implemented?

If this proposal is agreed, applications from September 2024 will be subject to the parental contribution.

All Post 16 students are required to apply each academic year therefore the parental contribution will apply to all current Post 16 students currently accessing transport organised by the Council.

Parents who are on a low income and are in receipt of certain benefits will have the parental contribution waived. In addition, families with a low income but not in receipt of certain benefits, but the imposition of a charge would take their income below the specified threshold may apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in charge.

What would the impact of this change be on children and young people with school transport arrangements?

All Post 16 students who are deemed eligible for transport assistance and wish to access this service will be subject to a parental contribution, unless they meet the low income criteria specified.

Proposal Two: The rewording and updating of the Council's policy to ensure it reflects the latest Department for Education statutory guidance

What is the current situation?

The Post 16 Statement has remained unchanged for a number of years and requires updating to be in line with DfE guidance 1.

What is being proposed?

It is proposed that a number of updates are made throughout the Policy document to provide clarity in wording and language, ensure the Policy is relevant to the current School Transport Service, and to reflect the most recent DfE guidance.

Examples of changes are given below and a comprehensive list of all the changes are outlined in Appendix 1.

- Review wording for students without special needs or a disability, clarifying that there isn't a statutory requirement to provide free transport.
- Review all wording that states free transport as we propose to introduce a charge.
- Remove reference to travel arrangements remaining the same once a student reaches the Post 16 age group.
- Include wording to confirm a student would need to apply each academic year.
- Define entitlement to mainland schools if named in the child's EHCP.
- Clearly define and set the statutory duty to facilitate attendance for students with special educational needs and/or disability, attending Post 16 education.
- Clarify the transport will only be provided at the start and end of school day, in line with statutory guidance.
- Residential placements - insert information when transport will be provided.
- Remove administrative and operational arrangements (Appendix 1 in current policy) and move to a webpage feature.
- Insert wording to clarify eligibility for students on apprenticeships and traineeships that transport will only be provided to the student's registered education establishment. Travel to other education establishments during the day is excluded.
- Review any specific language relating to colleges or institutions.
- Explanation of the Appeals and Complaints Process to be brought in line with proposed School Transport policy, which have been drafted based on the latest DfE statutory guidance.
- Promoting Independent travel training for SEN pupils whenever possible to promote independence.

Why is this being proposed?

The proposed changes would bring the Post 16 Transport Statement in line with the latest DfE statutory guidance. In addition, the updates to wording and language are proposed to ensure that the Policy remains clear and easy to understand.

How would this be implemented?

If approved, the proposed Policy would be implemented for use from September 2024, through the Councils Post 16 transport application process.

What would the impact of this change be on children and young people with SEND using the School Transport service?

The majority of changes outlined as part of this proposal would have no impact on the provision of transport, and parents should find that the Policy is easier to understand and would be assured about its accuracy. The proposed changes also provide more flexibility of transport provision, including the introduction of personal transport budgets (PTB's).

Proposal Three: For Personal Transport Budgets (PTB) to be available to families where a child or young person's needs or circumstances mean that suitable transport is difficult to find, or not available at all, in the local operator market

What is the current situation?

The Council assists eligible families currently using a range of transport solutions for Post 16 students. The majority of children and young people are able to make use of parental mileage allowance, buses, minibuses or taxis to travel to and from school. Some children and young people require an adapted vehicle or other special arrangements to accommodate their specific needs.

What is being proposed?

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) would be available for parents to allow them to make suitable travel arrangements for transport for their child, where this would be more suitable than the Council arranging this transport.

Why is this being proposed?

There are some situations where a child or young person's needs or circumstances mean that suitable transport is difficult to find, or not available at all, in the local operator market. For example, this may be because a child or young person requires an adapted vehicle that is not available locally, or they require skilled support tailored to their individual needs.

The current Policy does not make provision for the Council to offer flexible transport options, such as a transport budget, that could provide a better and safer option for transporting the child or young person. Introducing a PTB would offer a flexible option for families to make suitable travel arrangements tailored to a child or young person's needs.

Other local authorities such as Kent and West Berkshire make provision within their Policies for PTBs to be provided in exceptional circumstances. If approved, this proposed change would bring the Council's School Transport Policy in line with other local authorities in being able to offer a PTB where appropriate.

How would this be implemented?

If this proposal is agreed, Personal Transport Budgets would be offered to families where it is the most appropriate option from that point onwards.

In situations where the Council felt that a PTB would be a more suitable means of arranging transport to school, the School Transport Service would discuss this possibility with parents.

Parents would not be obliged to accept the offer of a PTB.

What would the impact of this change be on children and young people using the School Transport Service?

For many service users there would be no change in their transport provision. For a small number of children with needs best met by an alternative arrangement the School Transport service will investigate to see whether a Personal Transport Budget would allow for their needs to be met more effectively.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When would I know how these changes could impact my child(ren)?

If these proposals are agreed, the Post 16 Policy statement would be published by 31 May 2024. Parents would need to apply for transport assistance for September 2024 and meet criteria defined.

2. My child with SEND currently accesses shared transport to school/college. Can I apply for a Personal Transport Budget?

A Personal Transport Budget is available in circumstances where the parent and the Council both agree that it is an appropriate way to meet the travel to school needs of the child or young person.

This might be because the child or young person has complex needs that the parent understands best, or it might be that the parent is available and happy to take their child to school but needs some financial support to enable them to do so.

Conclusions

You are invited to give your views on the proposed changes to the Post 16 Transport Policy. You can do this by using the online response form at **www.iow.gov.uk/schools-and-education/home-to-school-transport/school-transport-consultations/**. The Information Pack and Response Form, along with Easy Read versions of both documents, are also available to download and print from the consultation webpage.

If you require a paper copy of the Information Pack or the Response Form or if you have any queries about the consultation, please email transport.info@iow.gov.uk with 'School Transport Policy consultation 2024' as the subject, or call: 01983 823780.

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APPENDIX 1 – Proposed Post 16 Statement Draft

Isle of Wight Council

**Post-16 Transport Policy Statement
2024 -2025**

Post 16 Transport Policy Statement – Academic Year 2024 - 2025

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

Department Responsible: School Transport

Contact Details: 01983 823870

Document first release: 31 May 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

Students are now required to be in education, employment or training until their 18th birthday, which could involve staying in full-time education in school/college, starting an apprenticeship or traineeship, or spending 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering while in part-time education or training. There has not, however, been any change to statutory school age which ends at the end of the academic year in which the student turns 16.

Local authorities do not have a general duty to provide free or subsidised Post 16 travel support but may decide to do so. The local authority has a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training (the 'sixth form age duty').

'Sixth form age' refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (years 12,13,14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties / disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

This policy uses the term 'Post 16' to include both learners of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties / disabilities up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that Isle of Wight Council (the council) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training. The local authority recognises that families may need a transport service to ensure that Post 16 students special educational needs and disabled students can access a place that is suitable for their needs and so do offer, under discretionary powers, a transport service that requires an annual parental contribution.

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

All young people carrying on their education Post 16 must reapply for travel support.

2. TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL SUPPORT

Bus discounts from Southern Vectis

Southern Vectis offer a range of discounts available for students up to the age of 19. Students aged 19+ can also benefit from 25% discount of fares providing they hold a valid NUS card.

For further information please visit www.islandbuses.info

Students who hold a English National Concessionary Bus Pass issued by the Isle of Wight Council, eligible on the basis of disability, may travel free at peak times, 7 days a week on any network bus.

For further details on how to apply for an English National Disabled Bus Pass please visit <https://www.iow.gov.uk/transport-and-parking/transport/public-transport/concessionary-travel-on-the-isle-of-wight/>

Train services

Island Line railway operates between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin, serving Smallbrook Junction, Brading, Sandown and Lake stations along the way operated by South Western Railway.

South Western Railway provide a selection of discounted fares by purchasing the following railcards, which are also valid outside of term time:

- 16-17 Saver Railcard (you can get up to 50% off certain fares and season tickets)
- 16 – 25 Railcard (you can get up to 1/3 off selected fares)
- Disabled Persons Railcard (you can get up to 1/3 off selected fares, plus 1/3 off for a companion when travelling together)

For further information on the application process for the above railcards please visit www.southwesternrailway.com

Wightlink Ferry Service *(Operating between Fishbourne and Ryde to Portsmouth, and Yarmouth to Lymington)*

Students aged between 16 - 18 years can purchase a season ticket for travel to and from the mainland for just over half the normal adult price.

For further information please visit the Wightlink website as detailed below www.wightlink.co.uk

Red Funnel Ferry *(Operating between East Cowes and West Cowes to Southampton)*

Red Funnel season tickets allow students who aged 16 - 18 years and in full time education at a mainland college to travel on a reduced ticket rate.

To apply for a season ticket or find out further information on please visit www.redfunnel.co.uk

Hovertravel Ferry Service *(Operating between Ryde and Southsea)*

Hovertravel offer a Academic Flyer ticket for students in full time education travelling across the Solent on a daily basis.

For further information please see the Hovertravel website as detailed below. <http://www.hovertravel.co.uk>

3. TRAVEL SUPPORT FROM SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

- 3.1** In addition to the support available from the Council, Post 16 providers may also provide financial support towards transport costs for certain students such as young parents, those from low income families, those at risk of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). This is determined by the provider and is often based on how they have locally determined to use 'hardship' funds.
- 3.2** 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 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
 - In care
 - Care leavers
 - in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
 - in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
 - discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.
2. Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 20xx or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 20xx and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 20xx 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 college are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk by searching for Post 16 bursaries.

Young Parents / Care to Learn

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

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare ‘taster’ session (up to 5 days)
- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to the childcare provider

For more information, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim>

4. LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) SUPPORT

LA support for young people without special educational needs or disabilities

4.1 The Council provides no free or subsidised transport for Post 16 mainstream students in further education.

LA support for learners with special educational needs or a disability

4.2 The local authority will provide travel assistance for Post 16 (age 16 – 25) students with special educational needs or disability. To deliver this service in the 2022/23 financial year, it cost the council £763k. A parental contribution towards the cost of this transport will be required which will increase by Consumer Price Index (CPI) each academic year. The charging schedule is detailed below:

Proposed charges detailed in consultation	
<u>Option 1</u> Flat rate charge	<u>Option 2</u> Mileage banding

Transport will normally only be offered if the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or if the student has a disability which means they require transport arrangements to be provided, but will not automatically be offered to those students. The student or their parent/s will need to apply for transport and provide evidence to support the request. The evidence must demonstrate that it is necessary for the local authority to provide transport to facilitate attendance, and evidence that without transport assistance, the student will be unable to attend the educational placement.

When assessing an application for transport assistance, the local authority will refer to the criteria set out in Appendix 1.

4.3 Students who have been assessed and are eligible for travel assistance will be allocated transport or travel assistance appropriate to their assessed needs. In addition to local authority organised transport, families may be offered the option of a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) which allows families to arrange transport

for the student themselves. The local authority will take into consideration any cost to the council which exceeds the cost of arranging the transport and will make a best value assessment based on the specific need of the student.

- 4.4** Some students with complex and/or severe needs are placed in a mainland residential special school or college because there is no appropriate provision available locally. Such students will receive transport at the start and end of each term, half term and at other school/college closures. Any additional transport will be the responsibility of parents/carers. Transport will be subject to the parental contribution charge as detailed in paragraph 4.2.
- 4.5** Transport is not offered to or from points other than the students registered school or college and the home address.
- 4.6** The expectation is that students will share transport and the drop off and collection arrangements are made in line with the college start and finish times. Transport is not able to take into consideration individual student's timetables and where appropriate, the transport arrangement may include a waiting time at the start and/or end of the day.
- 4.7** Independent Travel Training may be offered to eligible students with parent's consent. Readiness to complete Independent Travel Training would be outlined in the EHCP or agreed by the local authority following a discussion with the school or college and parents. Once an eligible student has successfully completed Independent Travel Training, their travel arrangements will be reviewed.
- 4.8** The home address will be that at which the student resides and spends the majority of their time. Occasionally a student will have more than one address, for example, because they live with parents who have different addresses. In this situation, the home address used for determining transport will be the one at which the student spends most of their time including weekends and school holidays as well as during the week. Where the student spends equal time at two addresses, parents must nominate one address as the home address for transport even if both addresses are eligible for transport assistance. Parents must let the local authority know if the student's home address changes and will be asked to provide evidence of this if it affects entitlement to transport assistance. When the student lives at the other address, they will not qualify for any transport arrangements other than the one provided from the home address.
- 4.9** The local authority may provide assistance with transport to education providers based on the mainland however students would still need to meet the criteria as detailed in Appendix 1
- 4.10** The same criteria as set out in Appendix 1 apply for students attending post 16 training providers. Students in apprenticeships with employed status do not qualify for any assistance with travel costs.
- 4.11** Students who apply and are granted local authority transport assistance are expected to comply with the [School Transport Code of Good Practice](#).

5. REIMBURSEMENT OF THE CHARGE

If travel assistance is no longer required part way through a term, a partial reimbursement of the charge may apply, provided that all tickets/passes have been returned and are received within the timescales stated in the table below. When calculating a reimbursement for tickets/passes received after the first day of a term an administrative charge of £60 will apply. The following levels of refund will be payable after the administration charge has been taken:

Length of time ticket/pass has been used	Refund due
Up to 4 weeks	75%
4 to 8 weeks	50%
Over 8 weeks	0%

No reimbursement will be paid during the summer term.

If a student has specialised arrangements i.e a taxi arrangement, we will be unable to offer a reimbursement of costs at any point during the academic year.

6. LA SUPPORT IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

- 6.1** If a young person (16-19 years old) is not in education, employment or training (NEET), they may be entitled to financial support with travel costs associated with efforts to engage in education, employment or training. Such assistance is made available through travel tokens issued in advance of their travel. These tokens can be used for travel from their home address to the Isle of Wight Council's Island Futures Team or to a Post 16 provider. Travel tokens are available through the Island Futures Team who can be contacted via email at island.futures@iow.gov.uk or by calling them on 01983 823888¹.

7. APPLYING FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY TRANSPORT SUPPORT

Information to be added at a later date once arrangement for applying have been determined.

¹ The discretionary offer is subject to local funding which is determined by 31 March each year.

Appendix 1

Criteria applied to determine eligibility for Transport Assistance (Post 16)

1. The following criteria applies to all students:

The local authority will provide travel assistance for full-time Post 16 (age 16 – 25) students with special educational needs or disability, providing they meet the following criteria:

- The student has an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) with a named school/s or educational setting/s
- The education establishment is considered to be the nearest suitable placement from their home address which offers a course or programme which is able to meet the special educational needs of the student concerned.
- The education establishment is over three miles from their home address, measured by the nearest available walking route

In some cases, transport may be provided even if the educational establishment is located within walking distance as set out above if it is deemed necessary, to facilitate the student's attendance. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may take into account, among other factors, the following:

- The student's ability to walk
- The student's need to be accompanied by an adult

2. The following criteria applies additionally to student's aged 16 or 17 in September 2024:

The local authority expects that parents and carers take responsibility for facilitating their child's attendance in education where they are able to do so.

Families/applications may apply for transport and explain their circumstances which makes support from the local authority with transport necessary to enable their child to attend their place of education or training. All requests for transport will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If deemed eligible to transport assistance, a parental contribution towards transport as set out in paragraph 4.2 will normally apply.

When a student's parent/s are in receipt of the following benefits the parental contribution charge will be waived.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit

- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on-paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400)

Families with a low income but not in receipt of the above benefits, where the imposition of the charge would reduce their income to around £16,190; or those with exceptional circumstances, may apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in charge.

3. The following applies additionally to student's who are:

- aged 18 when the transport starts in September 2024 or
- already 18 at the time of application or 19 or
- over and continuing on a course that they started before their 19th birthday

There will be no expectation that a parent will assist with their adult child's transport arrangement, although parents who wish to do will be welcome to support their adult child's transport arrangement.

If deemed eligible to transport assistance, a parental contribution towards transport as set out in paragraph 4.2 will normally apply.

When a student's parent/s are in receipt of the following benefits the parental contribution charge will be waived.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on-paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400)

Families with a low income but not in receipt of the above benefits, where the imposition of the charge would reduce their income to around £16,190; or those with exceptional circumstances, may apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in charge.

4. The following applies to students aged 19- 25 and starting a new course:

If deemed eligible to transport assistance under the criteria set out in section 1 and the student requires specialist provision to be arranged by the local authority due to their disability, no contribution towards the cost of transport will be required.

If deemed eligible to transport assistance under the criteria set out in section 1 and the student is does not require specialist provision, a contribution towards transport as set out in paragraph 4.2 will apply.

Appendix 2

School Transport - Review/Appeals Process

Parents who wish to challenge a decision about:

- The suitability of the transport arrangements offered to their child;
- their child's eligibility;
- the distance measurement in relation to statutory walking distances; and
- the inherent safety of the route in accordance with the Road Safety GB guidelines
- other exceptional circumstances

may do so via email to transport.info@iow.gov.uk or in writing to, School Transport, County Hall, High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1UD. Parents should indicate their reasons for challenging the decision using the categories above.

In the first instance a case will be reviewed by a Senior Officer within the School Transport Service.

In cases against refusal of a transport service there may be a further appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel made up of one or more Senior Officers outside of the School Transport Service. Members of the Panel will have an understanding of the school transport Policy and legislative framework and will make decisions on appeals against offers of transport.

Stage one: Review by a Senior Officer

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

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

Within 20 working days of receipt of the parent's written request a senior officer will review the original decision and send the parent a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review, setting out:

- whether they have upheld the local authority's original decision;
- why they reached that decision;
- how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g. Road Safety GB);

- the factors considered in reaching their decision;
- any other agencies or directorates that were consulted as part of the review.

Where they have upheld the original decision, they should also explain how the parent may escalate their appeal to stage two of the process.

Stage two: Review by an independent appeal panel, where it applies.

A parent has 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.

Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents request an independent appeal panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent and officers involved in the case and give a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days), setting out:

- whether they have upheld the local authority's original decision;
- why they reached that decision;
- how the review was conducted (including the standard followed e.g. Road Safety GB);
- the factors considered in reaching their decision;
- information about any other directorates and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the review; and
- information about the parent's right to put the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (see below).

The independent appeal panel will be made up of one or more members who will be independent of the original decision making process (but are not required to be independent of the local authority) and suitably experienced (at the discretion of the local authority), to ensure a balance is achieved between meeting the needs of the parents and the local authority, and that road safety requirements are complied with and no child is placed at unnecessary risk. Members will be assigned by Democratic Services.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman There is a right of complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, but only if complainants consider that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled. If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply for judicial review.