



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Travel Assistance Statement for Young People
Resident in Wokingham in Post-16 Education,
Including Young People With SEND**

Academic Year 2027/2028

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1. Introduction

This policy explains the travel options and support available for young people who live in Wokingham Borough and are continuing in education or training after Year 11.

The law is different for post-16 learners than it is for children of compulsory school age. Local authorities do not have a general duty to provide free or subsidised transport for all post-16 students. However, the Council must publish clear information each year about the travel arrangements and support that may be available.

This policy explains:

- **Who it applies to:** Young people aged 16–19 (Years 12, 13, 14) and learners with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) up to age 25.
- **What support is available:** Including local schemes, assistance for those with additional needs, and guidance on independent travel.
- **How to apply:** Students receiving travel assistance from the Local Authority must reapply for travel assistance prior to the transition to post-16 and, in many cases, will be asked to reapply each academic year, to ensure that travel assistance remains appropriate to need.

Our approach is to support young people to become as independent as possible, where this is safe and appropriate. This includes encouraging walking, cycling, public transport and Independent Travel Training where these options meet the young person's needs.

The policy also explains other sources of help, including bursaries, support from education providers, Care to Learn, and SENDIASS Wokingham.

This policy should be read alongside the [National Guidance on Post-16 Transport](#)

2. Travel Assistance Offered by External Organisations

The Council wants young people to be able to continue in education or training after Year 11. For most post-16 students, travel will be arranged by the family, the young person, or through support offered by the education or training provider. This section explains some of the schemes and organisations that may be able to help with travel or related costs.

3. Concessionary fares scheme available

Many local bus operators offer reduced fares for young people under 19. These can help with the cost of travel to school, college or training, including where the provider is outside Wokingham Borough. Families should check directly with the relevant bus or rail operator before choosing a course or provider, as discounts and routes can change.

4. Bursaries available from your Education Provider

Schools, sixth forms and colleges may be able to offer financial support to help young people attend education or training. This could include help with travel, meals, equipment, course materials or childcare. Families should contact the education provider directly to ask what support is available, how to apply, and what evidence is needed.

5. The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund can help eligible young people with education-related costs. This may include costs such as travel, meals, clothing, books or other equipment needed for a course. The fund is administered by schools, colleges and training providers, so families should contact the young person's education provider directly to ask what support is available, how to apply and what evidence is needed.

Young people aged 16 to 19

A young person aged 16 to 19 may be able to receive a bursary if they are studying at a publicly funded school or college in England (not a university), or are on an eligible training course, including unpaid work experience. A publicly funded school or college is one that does not charge the young person to attend.

Young people aged 19 and over

A young person aged 19 or over may also be able to receive a bursary if they are continuing a course they started when they were aged 16 to 18, known as being a 19+ continuer, or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

For further information about the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, including eligibility criteria and how to apply, visit <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>. Key local provider information can also be found on the [Council Local Offer website](#).

What a bursary can help with

A bursary can help with costs linked to education or training. This may include:

- Clothing, books and other equipment for the course
- Transport and lunch on days the young person studies or trains

There are two main types of 16 to 19 bursary: a bursary for students in vulnerable groups, and a discretionary bursary. The type of bursary available will depend on the young person's circumstances and the rules used by their school, college or training provider.

Bursary for students in vulnerable groups

A young person may be able to receive a bursary for students in vulnerable groups if at least one of the following applies to them:

- They are in local authority care, or have recently left local authority care;
- They receive income support or universal credit because they are financially supporting themselves;
- They receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their own name and also receive either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit; or
- They receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own name and also receive either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit.

The amount awarded will depend on the young person's individual costs and what they need

to take part in their course. This may include support with books, equipment, clothing, meals or travel to school, college or training.

Discretionary bursary

Schools, colleges and training providers set their own criteria for discretionary bursaries. They will consider the young person's individual circumstances, which usually includes household or family income, and may also consider course-related costs such as travel, meals, equipment or other essential items. Families should contact student services or the relevant support team at the education provider to ask what help is available, how to apply and what evidence they need to provide.

6. Residential Support Scheme

The Residential Support Scheme may help eligible young people with the cost of accommodation where they need to live away from home to attend a suitable course. Parents/carers should contact the college directly, as the college will check eligibility and advise how to apply.

Eligibility for the Residential Support Scheme

A young person may be eligible for the Residential Support Scheme if they meet the age, residency, income and course requirements. The college will confirm whether the course meets the scheme rules.

- Are at least 16 and under 19 on 31 August of the relevant academic year;
- Meet the residency requirements, which the college will check;
- Are not receiving Housing Benefit;
- Have a household income below the published threshold for the scheme; and
- Are studying their first level 2 or level 3 qualification, such as two or more A levels, a diploma or a national vocational qualification.
- Are aged 19 and are either continuing a course they started when they were aged 16 to 18, or have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

The course must also meet the scheme requirements. This means the course must:

- Be full-time at a college in England;
- Be 16 to 19 funded, which the college can confirm; and
- Not be at a specialist residential center, which the college can confirm

The course must be more than 15 miles from the young person's home or involve a round trip of more than 2 hours each day, and it must not be available closer to home.

What may be available from the Residential Support Scheme

The table shows the maximum amount available each year. The actual amount depends on accommodation costs. Payments can be made for a maximum of 3 years.

Gross household income	Studying outside London	Studying in London
Up to £21,000	Up to £3,458	Up to £4,079
£21,001 to £25,704	Up to £2,305	Up to £2,685
£25,705 to £30,993	Up to £1,152	Up to £1,355
£30,994 or more	No award	No award

7. Care to Learn

Care to Learn is a national scheme that can help young parents with childcare costs while they are studying. To qualify, the young person must be aged under 20 at the start of their course and be studying on an eligible publicly funded course in England.

What Care to Learn can help with

Care to Learn can help with childcare costs, including deposit and registration fees, short taster sessions, keeping a childcare place open during the summer holidays, and reasonable travel costs for taking the child to the childcare provider.

Payments and attendance requirements

Payments are made directly to the childcare provider. Before payments can be made, the childcare provider must confirm the child's attendance and the education provider must confirm that the young person is attending their course. Where travel costs are agreed as part of the scheme, the education provider will either pay those costs or arrange travel.

When support ends

Care to Learn payments will end if the young person stops attending their course, reaches the end of the course, or the child stops attending childcare.

Families should check the latest eligibility criteria, application process and payment rates on the GOV.UK Care to Learn page before applying, as the national scheme rules may change.

8. Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

SENDIASS Wokingham provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support about special educational needs and disabilities. The service is available to parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, and to children and young people themselves up to the age of 25. SENDIASS can provide support with:

- **Understanding the SEND system, including Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's), annual reviews and appeals;**
- **Expressing views and taking part in decisions about education, health and care support;**
- **Preparing for meetings with schools, colleges, early years settings, the Council, health services or social care professionals;**
- **Understanding reports, letters and other information relating to SEND support; and**
- **Finding other sources of information, advice, disagreement resolution or specialist support where appropriate.**

SENDIASS can help families and young people understand their options and make informed choices. It does not make decisions about travel assistance and is independent from the Council teams that assess eligibility. For further information, including useful leaflets and

guidance, visit the SENDIASS Wokingham website at;

- [https://www.sendiasswokingham.org.uk/useful-information/leaflets.](https://www.sendiasswokingham.org.uk/useful-information/leaflets)
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9. Travel Assistance Offered by Wokingham Borough Council

This section explains when Wokingham Borough Council may provide travel assistance for young people continuing in education or training after Year 11. There is no automatic entitlement to free transport for post-16 students. We will consider applications in line with this policy and the relevant legal duties. Where assistance is agreed, the Council will decide on the most suitable and reasonable form of support.

9.1. Who this section applies to

This section explains how the Council considers travel assistance for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). There are two separate groups: young people of sixth-form age, and young people aged 19 to 25. The legal duties are different for each group, so the Council will consider the application under the section that applies to the young person's age and circumstances.

- **Young people of sixth-form age** - usually aged 16 to 18, including those in Years 12, 13 or 14, who have an EHCP and meet the eligibility criteria in this policy.
- **Young people aged 19 to 25 with an EHCP** - this includes young people who are continuing the course they started before turning 19.

Young people aged 19 or over who are starting a new course will be considered under the adult learner duty via Adult Social Care.

9.2. Eligibility criteria for young people of sixth-form age

A young person may be eligible for travel assistance if all the following apply:

- They live in Wokingham Borough;
- They have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP); **and**
- They are attending the nearest suitable education or training provider that the Local Authority has identified in their EHCP as meeting their needs. If an education placement is not named on an EHCP, the Council will refuse any applications for transport to this provision.

In addition, the young person must also meet one of the following criteria:

- Their learning difficulty or disability prevents them from walking to their education or training provider, or from using public transport even with accompaniment where needed; **or**
- They have other exceptional circumstances that affect their ability to use public transport arrangements and mean they cannot travel independently or safely, even with accompaniment where needed, **and they live more than 3 miles from their nearest suitable provider.**

9.3. Young people aged 19 to 25 with an EHCP

Once a young person is over sixth-form age, there are two different scenarios in relation to travel assistance provided by Wokingham Borough council. It is important to identify which one applies before deciding where the request should be considered.

- **Scenario 1: Continuing a course started before age 19.** If the young person is aged 19 to 25, has an EHCP, and is continuing a course they started before turning 19, their application will be considered under this policy.
- **Scenario 2: Starting a new course aged 19 or over.** If the young person is aged 19 or over and starting a new course, the request will be considered by Adult Social Care under the adult learner duty. This is not funded through the general Home to School Transport budget. Families should contact Adult Social Care to discuss eligibility and how to apply.

For young people considered under **Scenario 1**, the Council will check whether all of the following apply:

- They live in Wokingham Borough;
- They have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- They are **continuing a course they started before turning 19**; and
- Attend a full-time college course of at least 12 hours per week, usually over at least 3

days per week, for the length of the course. The education provision must be named in the young person's EHCP.

They must also either:

- Be unable to walk to their education or training provider, or use public transport, because of their learning difficulty or disability, even with accompaniment where needed; **or**
- Have exceptional circumstances that mean they cannot use public transport or travel independently and safely, even with accompaniment where needed, **and live more than 3 miles from their nearest suitable provider.**

9.4. Definition of Suitable Provider and Course

Travel assistance will only be considered for the nearest education or training provider offering a course that the Council considers suitable. This means a course that:

- Meets the young person's learning and/or employment objectives; or
- Is specifically designed to meet their special educational needs.

This could include:

- Schools;
- Further education institutions;
- Council-maintained or assisted institutions providing higher or further education;
- Establishments funded directly by the education and skills funding agency (esfa); and
- Accredited learning providers, such as colleges, charities or private providers, delivering programmes funded by the council that support positive outcomes.

9.5. The Local Authority Travel Assistance Offer

The standard travel assistance offer for students aged 16 to 18 is a **Personal Transport Budget (PTB)**. A PTB is a direct payment to families to help them arrange travel to school or college. It is offered instead of Council-Organised Transport (COT). Requests for traditional transport, such as a taxi or minibus, will be considered on a case-by-case basis and offered only in exceptional circumstances.

A PTB is a contribution towards travel costs. It is not intended to cover the full cost of a door-to-door taxi service in every case.

In this policy, “travel assistance” means either:

- a Personal Transport Budget (PTB); or
- Council-Organised Transport (COT).

Eligible students moving into post-16 education for the first time must apply for a PTB if they need travel assistance. Once eligibility has been confirmed, families can appeal the PTB offer if they believe traditional transport is the only suitable option and that arranging or funding transport themselves would not be manageable, even with a PTB. The Council will then consider the family’s individual and/or exceptional circumstances.

9.6. Personal Transport Budgets

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment to help families arrange suitable travel to school or college. It gives families flexibility to choose travel arrangements that work for their young person, provided those arrangements are safe, reliable and support regular attendance.

A PTB is one form of travel assistance. It may not be suitable in every case. If the Council decides that a PTB would not meet the young person’s assessed needs, or would not be safe or reasonable, another form of assistance may be considered.

Why choose a personal transport budget (PTB)?

- Parents/carers can make arrangements that suit the family
- Parents/carers have control over how the money is spent
- The young person may feel more secure and relaxed at school or college
- Parents/carers may be able to share costs by making arrangements with other families
- The PTB may help the young person become more independent

How to apply for a Personal Transport Budget (PTB)

Parents and carers should apply for post-16 travel assistance through the Council's [online travel assistance application process](#) once the young person's school or college place has been confirmed. A new application is generally expected for each academic year.

The application should include full information about the young person's needs, their education placement, the travel options the family has considered, and all relevant evidence that may help the Council decide whether travel assistance is needed and what form of support is suitable.

Families should provide this evidence when they submit the application, rather than waiting until a review or appeal. This is important because the SEND Transport Panel can only make a decision based on the information available at the time. Providing clear evidence at the application stage helps the Panel make a fair and informed decision and may avoid the need for an appeal later. Where the Council determines that a travel assistance offer is appropriate, the Council will confirm the offer in writing.

Calculation of the PTB amount

- The PTB is based on the straight-line distance from home to school or college.
- There are three distance bands shown in the table below, assuming attendance 5 days a week. If the young person attends fewer days, the amount is adjusted pro rata.
- Online maps can give families an indication of the distance, but the Council will confirm the official measurement.

Table1: Post-16 Personal Transport Budget payment bands

Band	One-way distance from home to school (miles)	Personal Transport Budget Payment
1	Up to 5 miles	£2000 per annum
2	5 to 10 miles	£3000 per annum
3	Over 10 miles	£5000 per annum

PTB payments are based on the young person attending school or college for 190 days per year. If the young person attends for fewer than 190 school days in the school year, or starts part way through the year, Wokingham Borough Council will calculate the PTB on a pro-rata basis.

PTB payments will not be made for days when the young person is not required to attend school or college, for example study leave or other authorised absences from the school or college site. This means the family may receive less than the total amount shown above. Wokingham Borough Council will send parents/carers a schedule each year setting out the expected termly payments, based on 100% attendance and the young person's timetable. Parents/carers must tell the Council within 14 days if the schedule is incorrect. If they do not, it may not be possible to correct any underpayments later.

If the young person is absent from school or college, even if this is through no fault of the family, the following term's payment will be reduced to reflect the reduction in required travel. Free school transport is also not available for work experience or additional journeys required by the school or college. Parents/carers will be told about any reduction before the next term's payment is made.

Retrospective payments

Retrospective payments will not be made. The Council will not reimburse parents or carers for transport costs incurred before travel assistance has been formally approved and accepted by the family in question. If a family elects to appeal a travel assistance decision and the appeals process runs into the academic year in question, the family will be liable for making the necessary travel arrangements (and the associated costs) until such time as a transport offer is accepted by the family in writing. Any agreed support will start from the date confirmed by the Council, and families remain responsible for travel arrangements and costs before that date.

Change of circumstances

Parents/carers must notify the Council immediately in writing or by email about any change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for travel assistance or the PTB payment, for example:

- The family moves address, or the young person changes school, college or site.
- The young person's timetable changes and this affects their school or college hours or days.
- Long term absences (5 consecutive school days or more).

If parents/carers do not tell the Council about a change in circumstances, and the Council later decides that the change would have reduced or ended the young person's entitlement to payments, the Council may end the PTB payments and seek to recover any money that should not have been paid.

Parents/carers should contact the Council for advice if they are unsure whether a change might affect the PTB.

If a change in circumstances means that the young person is no longer eligible for travel assistance, PTB payments will stop.

Change of payment

There are circumstances in which the amount of PTB payment may be reviewed, adjusted, suspended or terminated. These are:

- The young person's attendance falls below 90% termly.
- The young person regularly arrives late at school or college in the mornings.
- The young person arrives at school or college in a condition that affects their ability to learn.
- The travel arrangements put in place using the PTB are considered unsuitable or unsafe for the young person.
- The young person accesses short break stays away from the family home.
- There is a change to national legislation and/or the Council's policies.
- Where more than one eligible child, young person or household member attends the same school or college, or another school or college nearby, only one PTB will normally be paid to the household.

Review of PTB arrangements

The PTB will be reviewed regularly. As part of the review, the Council may contact the young person's school or college to request attendance records and confirm that the young person is able to access their learning opportunities.

Once the review has been completed, any decision to adjust or withdraw the PTB will be given to parents/carers in writing.

PTB payments will be made into a nominated bank account every term in advance. In exceptional circumstances, alternative payment arrangements may be agreed between parents/carers and the Council.

Using a Personal Transport Budget (PTB)

Parents/carers can use a PTB in a flexible way to help the young person get to school or college. The travel arrangements put in place must be safe, reliable and support regular attendance.

A PTB might be used to:

- Drive the young person to and from school or college;
- Arrange for a friend or relative to transport, walk or cycle with them;
- Share transport with another family;
- Buy a bus pass for the young person, or for someone who needs to travel with them;
- Pay for a place on school or college transport;
- Help pay for a taxi, either independently or shared with another family; or
- Pay for childcare for another child so that a parent/carer can travel with the eligible young person.

If parents/carers use the PTB to employ someone, they are responsible for making sure all legal requirements are met. This may include tax, National Insurance, employment law, insurance, and health and safety. The Council also recommends that parents/carers arrange a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for anyone they are thinking of employing.

If parents/carers use the PTB to pay an organisation or individual, such as an after-school club or transport provider, they are responsible for the agreement they make. This includes payment terms, notice periods and cancellation arrangements. If parents/carers are unsure about their responsibilities, they may wish to seek independent legal advice.

Parents/carers are responsible for deciding how to use the PTB to support travel to school or college, but must make sure it is used properly and in line with this policy.

The PTB cannot be used:

- To buy a place on Council transport;
- For anything that does not help the young person travel to or from school or college;
- For anything illegal, unlawful or unsafe; or
- In a way that could harm the Council's reputation.

If the PTB is not used in line with this policy, the Council may ask for money to be repaid.

Where a family receives a PTB, parents/carers may wish to speak to the young person's school or college. The school or college may be able to help them contact other families who also receive a PTB, so they can explore shared travel arrangements where appropriate.

Ending the PTB agreement

- Parents/carers can cancel the PTB at any time. If the PTB is cancelled, the Council may not be able to arrange alternative transport until the start of the next term.
- If the PTB is cancelled, parents/carers must tell anyone they have employed or contracted using the PTB.
- If the Council decides to end the PTB, parents/carers will receive at least one month's written notice.

9.7. Independent Travel Training

Independent Travel Training supports young people to build the skills and confidence they need to travel as independently as possible. This supports preparation for adulthood and, where appropriate, future employment. If the Council thinks a young person may benefit from Independent Travel Training, we may contact the family to discuss an assessment.

An ITT assessment will be carried out with the support of the family and/or school, to confirm the suitability of the young person for the one-to-one ITT programme, considering the following criteria:

- The likelihood of the young person being eligible for SEND transport under the 16 to 19 policy
- Existing level of independent travel skills
- The age of the young person
- The distance between home and school
- The Special Educational Needs/Disability of the young person
- The route which the young person would need to undertake
- Journey times using public transport and the complexity of the journey
- The frequency of the journeys required,

This assessment would take place before the young person begins the ITT programme, which would last for approximately 8 to 12 weeks. During the programme, the young person will travel to and from their education or training provision each day with their dedicated one-to-one ITT trainer, in both the morning and afternoon.

During the period when a young person is taking part in ITT, this will be their travel assistance offer. At the end of the ITT programme, the Council will review the young person's progress with the family to decide whether it is appropriate for them to continue to travel independently. If it is not appropriate for the young person to travel independently, their travel assistance offer will be reviewed.

Although most young people are successfully supported to achieve and benefit immensely from becoming independent travelers, it is however acknowledged that, for some young people, due to the nature of their SEND, ITT will not be appropriate.

For more information, visit [Independent Travel Training](#) on our website or email SENDTtransport@wokingham.gov.uk.

9.8. Review of eligibility

If a young person is assessed as not eligible for travel assistance, the Council will not normally reassess the application again in the same academic year unless there has been a relevant change in circumstances. This could include a change of home address, a change of education or training provider, or new evidence that may affect eligibility. Families can also use the appeals procedure if they disagree with the decision.

All Travel Assistance offered is subject to annual review, in line with Department for Education Guidelines, and it is at the discretion of the Council.

9.9. Annual Re-Application and Deadlines

All post-16 students who receive travel assistance, whether through a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) or Council-Organised Transport (COT), will typically be required to reapply every academic year. This applies to all students.

Travel assistance ends on 31 July each year. It will not continue automatically into the next academic year. Parents and carers should expect to have to submit a new application each year and assistance will only continue if the new application is approved.

Applications should be made as soon as the learner's school or college place is confirmed and **no later than 31 May each year**. Applications received after this date may mean that travel

assistance is not in place for the start of the autumn term.

9.10. Exceptional Circumstances

We understand that every young person and family is different. When considering exceptional circumstances, the Council will look at the full picture, including the young person's needs, the journey, available travel options, family circumstances, relevant professional evidence, the EHCP where applicable, and any transport risk assessment.

The examples listed below will not normally be treated as exceptional circumstances if they are the only reason given. However, they may still be considered where they form part of a wider set of circumstances supported by evidence. Examples include:

- single parent families;
- parents or carers who work;
- having other children to look after, including children at other schools;
- living in a rural area, with or without access to public transport;
- parents, carers or students being unable to drive, or not having access to a car; and
- students who use wheelchairs.

A combination of circumstances may amount to exceptional circumstances. Families should provide as much relevant information and evidence as possible so the Council can make a fair and informed decision.

The Council will consider any exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

9.11. Unsuccessful Applicants

If an application is unsuccessful, the Council will explain the reasons for the decision in writing. The Council will also explain how parents/carers can ask for the decision to be reviewed.

If the young person is not eligible for travel assistance, parents/carers may still want to consider the following options:

- Parents/carers may be able to apply for a spare seat on the Council's existing larger bus routes , where a seat is available. Spare seats are offered at the Council's

discretion, are not guaranteed, and are subject to availability. More information is available on the [Spare Seat Scheme and post-16 support page](#).

- Ask the young person's school, college or sixth form about bursary schemes or other support that may help with travel costs.
- Use [My Journey Wokingham](#) to explore walking, cycling, public transport and journey planning options.
- If parents/carers believe the policy has not been applied correctly, or relevant information has not been considered, they can ask for the decision to be reviewed via an appeal.
- For more information about appeals and complaints, please visit the [Appeals and complaints page](#).

9.12. Complaints and Appeals

What is the difference between an appeal and a complaint?

Complaints arise when parents/carers are unhappy about something, for example where they feel they have not been dealt with properly or in a professional manner, that information given to them was incorrect, or that there has been an unacceptable delay.

Queries or concerns relating to operational matters, such as timings, pick-up/drop-off arrangements, PTB payments or issues with the transport operator please contact the Community Transport Team via email at CTU.Group@wokingham.gov.uk.

For eligibility, SEND Transport risk assessments or policy-related queries, please refer to the SEND Transport Team at SENDTransport@wokingham.gov.uk

If the issue has not been resolved after contacting the relevant team, parents/carers should follow the Complaints Procedure.

With an appeal, parents/carers may be satisfied with the way they have been treated but feel that the wrong decision has been made and would like it re-examined. For these issues, parents/carers should follow the Appeals Procedure.

9.13. Complaints Procedure

Complaints about the provision of Travel Assistance will be investigated in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy.

The complaints policy can be found at:

➤ <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/contact-us/complaints-and-compliments/>.

This does not apply to complaints about a refusal to grant transport, which will be dealt with through the Transport Appeals procedure (see below).

9.14. Appeals procedure

If parents/carers disagree with a decision about travel assistance, they can ask for the decision to be reviewed. This may be because they believe the policy has not been applied correctly, because important information was not considered, or because their circumstances mean the proposed travel arrangement is not suitable.

Parents/carers must request a Stage 1 review in writing within 20 working days of receiving the decision letter and should include any evidence they want the Council to consider.

The Council does not provide interim or temporary travel assistance while parents or carers are waiting for a Stage 1 or a Stage 2 appeal to be heard or decided. Parents and carers remain responsible for making sure their child attends school regularly, including arranging travel to and from school until such time as the Council has agreed to provide travel assistance. When accepting a school place, parents and carers should therefore consider how their child will get to and from school. Where an application and Stage 1 appeal have both been considered and the child has been found not to be eligible for travel assistance, that decision will remain in place while any Stage 2 appeal is awaiting consideration.

Evidence required for Stage 1 appeal

If an appeal is based on parents/carers being unable to transport the young person because of work commitments, or because they believe the Personal Transport Budget offered does not reasonably meet the family's circumstances, they will be expected to provide evidence to support this. This helps the Council understand what options have been explored and whether there are exceptional circumstances that need to be considered.

Where relevant, this may include written evidence that both parents or carers have made a formal flexible working request to their employer, in line with their legal right to request flexible working, to enable them to transport their young person to and from school or college.

If an employer has refused a flexible working request, parents/carers should provide written evidence of the refusal and the reasons given by the employer. If no reasonable basis has been provided, the Council would expect to see evidence that the decision has been challenged through the employer's appeal or dispute process, where one is available. Further information about flexible working rights is available at:

➤ <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working>.

Where an appeal is based on affordability, parents/carers should provide clear evidence of the financial circumstances of all parents or carers. This should include evidence of income, savings and regular outgoings, so the Council can consider whether the family can reasonably meet the transport costs themselves, or contribute towards them, taking account of any PTB offered.

If the family considers that a taxi is the only way the young person can access their education placement, they should also provide an estimated cost of taxi transport based on their own research, including quotes from at least three taxi firms. This helps evidence the financial impact that arranging taxi transport would have on the family, taking account of any PTB offered.

For clarity, the affordability test is not whether the PTB covers the full cost of a taxi service.

The Council will consider whether the remaining cost to the family, after taking account of the PTB, would place an unsustainable financial burden on them.

It is important to note that the provision of this evidence is essential to enable the Council to make an informed decision as to the viability / affordability of a family making their own arrangements for transport. A statement that private transport arrangements are impractical or unaffordable alone (without the supporting evidence outlined above) is unlikely to have a substantial bearing on appeal decisions.

Before submitting an appeal, please bear in mind the following:

➤ **Parental/Student Responsibility for Travel Choices**

If a family or young person chooses a further education provider that is not the nearest suitable provider offering the required course, the family is responsible for arranging travel to and from that provider.

➤ **Walking Distance and Accompaniment**

If the student lives within 3 miles, it is expected that they will travel independently or with appropriate support. We are unable to consider parental work or personal commitments as a reason for being unable to accompany or support the student's journey. If it is assessed that the student can reasonably walk or travel independently (or with support), transport assistance will not be provided.

➤ **Medical Grounds for Appeal**

If an appeal is based on medical grounds, either for the student or a parent/carer, appropriate documentary evidence must be provided at the time the appeal is submitted. This may include medical letters or reports from a relevant professional.

9.15. How to make a Stage 1 Appeal

Refer to our appeals and complaints procedure on our website at [Appeals and complaints](#)

- <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-information-and-services/travel-assistance-school-and-college/appeals-and-complaints>

9.16. Stage 2 - Appeals Panel

If parents/carers remain unhappy with the decision made at Stage 1, they will have 20 working days from receipt of the Council's decision to request that the matter is escalated to a Stage 2 appeal. **Stage 2 can only be requested after Stage 1 has been completed.**

Within 40 working days of receipt of your request, an independent appeals panel will consider written and/or verbal representations from both the parents and officers involved in the case and will give a written notification of the outcome within 5 working days.

No member of the appeal panel will have been involved in the original decision to decline Travel Assistance.

It is outside the School Transport Appeals Panel's role to review the policy itself. The Panel is also unable to consider school admission matters. If parents/carers decide to submit a Stage 2 appeal, they should clearly explain why they believe the reasons for refusing the Stage 1 appeal, as set out in the Stage 1 appeal decision letter, do not comply with the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy.

If relevant evidence was requested or expected at Stage 1 and is still not provided at Stage 2, the outcome is likely to remain unchanged. Stage 2 is intended to review whether the Stage 1 decision was made correctly, based on the information and evidence provided.

9.17. How to make a Stage 2 Appeal

Refer to our appeals and complaints procedure on our website at [Appeals and complaints](#)

Parents/carers can request a Stage 2 appeal by emailing:

- democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

Following the outcome of a Stage 2 appeal, parents/carers may complain to the Local

Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) if they believe the Council failed to follow the correct procedure or there was an irregularity in how the appeal was handled.

The LGSCO can be contacted at:

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH

Helpline: 0300 061 0614.

www.lgo.org.uk