



**Somerset
Council**

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

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	Somerset Council Post-16 Travel Policy Statement Academic Year 2024-2025

Version History

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Approval	Name	Date
Lead Member for Transport & Digital	Cllr Richard Wilkins	21/05/2024
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Somerset Council Post-16 Travel Policy Statement Academic Year 2024-2025

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

Departments Responsible: Transporting Somerset, Commissioning Highways & Transport & SEND Inclusion

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Introduction

Beyond the end of Year 11 (or aged 16), Somerset Council does not have a statutory duty to provide home to school (including academies and free schools)/college transport free of charge for students aged 16 to 19. However, in order to promote access to education and opportunities for all young people in the County, Somerset Council will provide travel options for students aged between 16 and 19 to access continued education, Post 16 education at a sixth form school, further education establishment, a Local Authority commissioned learning provider or attending College.

Somerset Council, in consultation with stakeholders, works to ensure that the individual needs of young people are paramount, whilst balancing equality of access to education and training opportunities with value for money by:

- Developing a collective strategy relating to post 16 school/college travel assistance within the context of Government, EFA (Education Funding Agency) and Somerset Council strategies
- Identifying gaps in travel provision and filling those gaps to improve accessibility to education and to maximise choice of learning venue
- Improving travel information for all young people and adult learners
- Discussing priorities with local education and training providers
- Focusing on improving travel for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by providing subsidised specialised travel assistance where eligible or through the Somerset Independent Travel Training Scheme to increase the independence for this group of learners
- Improving travel links in deeply rural areas by maintaining the provision of demand responsive travel schemes and affordable access to learning for young people, improving their employment opportunities and reducing social exclusion
- Enabling travel provision to remove barriers to learning and training for those from vulnerable groups and/or those most likely not to be in education employment or training

Student Tickets

For those students needing to travel via public transport, purchasing one of the ticket options offered by the public transport operators would be most cost-effective. Details of the individual operators and ticket options can be found below on pages 6 and 7. Please note, if your journey **from your home address to college** normally requires you to change routes to access College **and through fares are not available**, please contact the Public Transport Team at Somerset Council via transport@somerset.gov.uk and we will look at options to ensure that you only pay one fare.

For those students attending Post 16 provision at either a Local Authority Sixth form school or an Academy, there is the option of applying for a paid seat on the contracted school bus where there is space available.

It is important to note that there is no guarantee of seat availability as this can only be accommodated where there is sufficient capacity within Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR).

Students are recommended to have a contingency plan if their request cannot be accommodated.

Where the Local Authority can accommodate Post 16 pay seats to sixth form schools and academies, the charge for this ticket is £971 for the academic year 2024/25. This charge is reviewed annually and increased in line with CPI. There is a direct debit option available to enable students to spread the payment over the year. Students are advised to check the attendance requirements of their 6th form College from September to determine whether this is the most cost-effective option. To apply for a seat on the contracted school bus, please use the standard pay seat application form (see link below) but **mark clearly on your application that it is for 6th form travel.**

[Request school transport on a paying basis \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk)

Student Ticket Offers available for the 2024/25 Academic Year –

(Please note that all bus service details and fares (where available) are correct at the time of publication in May 2024)

Public bus operators offer a range of tickets, with some operators offering daily tickets, as well as ticket bundles. The list below is not comprehensive, and you are strongly advised to contact the operator of the service you intend to use directly or visit their website to check single, day return and any other season tickets they may be able to offer you. The contact details for all bus operators are listed on pages 20 and 21 of this policy document.

For further information on Public Transport provision in Somerset, help with journey planning and using the services available please visit the Think Travel website, a link is provided on page 16.

Buses of Somerset

Buses of Somerset offer various ticket options including ticket bundles, a weekly ticket and an mticket (which can be purchased through the mobile phone mticket App).

Local town zone tickets and bundles are available for Taunton, Bridgwater and Yeovil. Please visit the Buses of Somerset website for more information on ticket options and fares or contact the operator.

Hatch Green Coaches

Once the government national £2 single fare initiative ends, a £5-day return ticket will be available on college days only for bus services 10C, 19, 23, 23B, 51, 95, 613 and 624.

Local town zone tickets are currently available for Taunton.

For all other Hatch Green bus services please contact the operator.

First West of England

Young people (16-21) and students (of any age if in full time education) can get a discounted rate on all tickets across the West of England (Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare & Wells).

Students must be in full time education and can show any student photo ID in order to purchase these specific student tickets.

Further details can be found on the First West of England website or contact the operator.

South West Coaches

Once the government national £2 single fare initiative ends, a £5-day return ticket will be available on college days only for bus services 646, 647, 648, and 652. For all other South West Coaches bus services please contact the operator.

Libra Travel

Once the government national £2 single fare initiative ends, a £5-day return ticket will be available on college days only for bus services 31, 668, 519, 649 and 669. For all other Libra Travel bus services please contact the operator.

Bakers Dolphin Coaches

Once the government national £2 single fare initiative ends, a £5-day return ticket will be available on college days only for bus services 62 and 66. For all other Bakers Dolphin bus services please contact the operator.

Isle Valley

Once the government national £2 single fare initiative ends, a £5-day return ticket will be available on college days for bus service 4.

FromeBus

For FromeBus services please contact the operator.

Dartline

Dartline operate bus service 20 from Seaton to Taunton via Honiton. For ticket options please contact the operator.

Somerset Accessible Transport (The Council's In-house Fleet)

Once the government national £2 single fare initiative ends, a £5-day return ticket will be available on college days only for bus services 19 and X25. Local town zone tickets are currently available for Taunton. For all other services operated by Somerset Council please contact the Somerset Accessible Transport Team

Financial Support for Post 16 Students

16-19 Bursary Fund

If you're aged between 16 and 19 years and think you might struggle with the costs for full-time education or training, you can apply to your college for a bursary. There are two types of 16-19 bursary:

1. A bursary of £1,200 per year if you are vulnerable.

The definition of 'vulnerable' includes those students where at least one of the following applies:

- You are in or recently left Local Authority care.
- You get Income Support or Universal Credit because you're financially supporting yourself.
- You get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit.
- You get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit.

If you qualify, the bursary will be paid direct from your school or college.

2. A discretionary award if you are facing financial barriers.

This can include if you are having difficulty in meeting the costs of transport, meals, books and/or equipment. Your college or training provider is responsible for deciding who is eligible, how you get your bursary, how much to pay and how regularly it will be paid. The college or training provider will usually want to see evidence, for example a letter regarding your benefits

If you have any concerns following the college's decision regarding your application for a bursary then please contact Transporting Somerset within the Local Authority.

Discretionary Support Funds

Funding bodies give colleges money so that they can make hardship grants available to their students. These funds are aimed at helping disadvantaged students with the costs of further education, for example, because they have a low income or have a disability.

Each college has their own policy on who is eligible for funding and what they will provide grants for. Grants can cover the cost of:

- childcare and related transport costs
- course related books and equipment
- transport to and from college
- course field trips
- examination fees.

Please contact your Student Support or Welfare Officer at the college for further information and help in applying.

Care to Learn Bursaries

The intention of Care to Learn (C2L) provides help for young parents (defined as those aged under 20) to continue in education after the birth of a child. It provides funding for childcare whilst the young parent is engaged in a study Programme and is not able to provide care for their child. C2L can also help with travel costs involved in taking the child to the childcare provider. For further information and an application form visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

Support available from Colleges in Somerset

This will vary between Colleges. At the time of publication, information relating to support and bursaries was not available from the main FE Colleges for the 2024/25 academic year. Students are advised to contact the College direct, contact details are provided on pages 17-19.

Support available from Somerset Council

Petrol allowances are available at 18 pence per mile up to a limit of £135.00 per annum for young people living more than three miles from their nearest bus stop to gain access to and from the local bus network. These allowances are not means tested. Students can request an application form for the petrol allowance via email to transport@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 2224

Students who are recent Care Leavers and require financial assistance should contact their social worker or leaving care worker, and/or their College. The College will be able to provide advice on bursaries available.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

There is no statutory entitlement for travel assistance once a young person reaches 16 years of age, any travel assistance offered is discretionary.

Where a post 16 student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and is attending the school/College named within their EHCP and is the nearest appropriate school/College for their post 16 education, travel assistance may be considered. If the provision named is not the nearest provision any requests for travel assistance will be refused. It is important to note that public transport will be promoted for this group and independent travel training referrals will be made for all students with the expectation that they will be assessed for suitability for training by the end of the first term of post 16 education.

Somerset Council may provide a specialist travel service where it assesses that the proposed course is appropriate and special travel arrangements are necessary for the student to access the course.

All eligible students will have to pay a contribution of £971 for the 2024/25 academic year. This contribution is reviewed annually and increased in-line with CPI. For applications received after the start of term the full contribution amount will still apply.

Suitable travel arrangements for eligible students can include:

- A bus or train pass
- Offer of Travel Training
- A seat on an existing/contracted route
- A fuel allowance
- Personal Travel Payment (PTP)

Travel assistance is for one return journey from a designated pick-up point to the school/establishment during standard academic terms only and at the official start and end of the School/College day. Travel assistance cannot be provided to meet a student's individual timetable. Additional journeys required outside of the start and end of the School/College Day will be the responsibility of the student, parent or carer to arrange and fund.

Travel assistance is not provided for induction days, transitional periods, medical appointments nor work experience.

Where the course the student is studying is on a split site, assistance will only be provided to the main qualifying campus.

An application for travel assistance will need to be submitted and an assessment for eligibility undertaken.

When the LA receives an application for travel assistance to the relevant establishment, we will consider the following information: -

- Whether the student is a Somerset resident
- The age and needs of the student
- The distance to the relevant establishment (over 3 miles statutory walking distance). Further supporting or medical evidence will be required if the student does not meet this requirement
- The length of the journey in relation to the needs of the young person
- Whether the student can use public service vehicles. Lack of public service vehicles in an area is not in itself a reason to offer travel assistance
- Whether the student is applying for transport to their nearest college, 6th form college or school
- Whether the student is attending a full-time course (a minimum of 540 hours per year – approximately 14 hours per week – of supervised study across three academic terms).

Travel assistance for SEND students who reach the age of 19 (sixth form age duty) while continuing a course

Travel assistance, where approved, will continue for a course of study until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes 19 years of age. However, assistance will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel encouraged.

Support for SEND students aged 19-25 (Adult learners)

Applications for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged between 19 and 24 years of age for travel assistance will be considered on an individual basis for a first course of study only. Travel assistance will not be agreed for a change of course. This is for students with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation. A new application will need to be made for each Academic year of study for travel assistance to be reviewed and continued, where eligible.

An assessment will be made of the application taking account of this Travel Policy Statement detailed above, the particular circumstances of the applicant and the case for assistance with travel. Where travel assistance is agreed, it will normally continue during the agreed course of study until the end of the academic year in which the students 25th birthday occurs. However, travel assistance will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel encouraged. Please note that there will be no contribution charge for these learners.

Application process for SEND students

All applicants will need to complete an application for travel assistance annually (including returning students) which can be found here: [School transport and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/school-transport-and-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send)

Independent Travel Training Scheme for SEND students

Somerset Council employs Independent Travel Trainers who work with appropriate students to train them to travel independently. Students are trained in road safety awareness, using money for travel, as well as using contactless payments/apps and safe independent travel. Whilst the student is training, the cost of travel will be covered by the Travel Trainers. If the independent travel training has been successful, the student will be required to pay for their travel on the public bus. Public bus operators offer a range of ticket options, details of which can be found on pages 6 and 7 of this Policy, contact details for the individual operators can be found on pages 20 and 21. Please note refusal to participate in this scheme may result in travel assistance being withdrawn.

Apprenticeships/Traineeships

Travel assistance is not provided to students undertaking work placements, apprenticeship or traineeships. In these circumstances, young people are advised to contact their employer or learning provider.

Useful Contact Numbers for students with learning disabilities and/or other disabilities

Avalon School 01458 443081

office@avalonsch.uk

www.avalonschool.org.uk

Bath College (Somer Valley Campus) 01225 312191

info@bathcollege.ac.uk

www.bathcollege.ac.uk

Bridgwater & Taunton College (Bridgwater campus) 01278 455464

info@btc.ac.uk

www.btc.ac.uk

Critchill School 01373 464148

office@critchillschool.com

www.critchillschool.co.uk

Fairmead School 01935 421295

office@fairmeadschool.co.uk

www.fairmeadschool.com

Fiveways School 01935 476227

office@fiveways.school

www.fivewaysschool.co.uk

Polden Bower School 01278 496386

office@poldenbower.org.uk

www.poldenbower.org.uk

Richard Huish College 01823 320800

hello@huish.ac.uk

www.huish.ac.uk

Selworthy School 01823 284970

office@selworthy.oak.education

www.selworthy.somerset.sch.uk

Somerset Council 0300 123 2224
transport@somerset.gov.uk
www.somerset.gov.uk

Strode College 01458 844400
courseinfo@strode-college.ac.uk
www.strode-college.ac.uk

The Mendip School 01749 838040
office@themendipschool.com
www.themendipschool.co.uk

Weston College 01934 411411
enquiries@weston.ac.uk
www.weston.ac.uk

Wiltshire College Trowbridge 01225 350035
info@wiltshire.ac.uk
www.wiltshire.ac.uk

Yeovil College 01935 423921
enrol@yeovil.ac.uk
www.yeovil.ac.uk

When should learners start to apply for Transport support?

As early as possible, preferably during the Spring or Summer terms prior to their start at college/sixth form/school in the following September. Students applying for a seat on a contracted bus should do so by the end of the summer term to enable capacity requirement to be reviewed and scholar bus tickets to be produced for September, where there is space available. Applicants with learning disabilities and /or other disabilities should refer to the information provided above and apply before 30th of June. Late applications may not be processed in time for the start of term.

What help is available to learners who need to travel to a course that is beyond the Somerset Local Authority area?

If the chosen course is unavailable in Somerset, or the 'out of county' college is the nearest college to the student's home that offers that course, then the student should look into the ticket options available on the public service routes. Petrol allowances are available at 18 pence per mile up to a limit of £135.00 per annum for young people living more than three miles from their nearest bus stop to gain access to and from the local bus network, or where there is no public transport available. These allowances are not means tested. Students can request an application form for the petrol allowance via email to transport@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 2224.

What help is available for learners who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to lodge away from home?

Termly travel is offered for eligible students i.e., one journey at the start of term and one journey at the end of term. Additional trips home must be facilitated and funded by parents. Some students who need to live away from home in order to attend the course may apply for a 'Residential Bursary' and should enquire about this at the Further Education institution they will attend.

Appeals and Complaints Process – All students

If a student is not happy with the service, they receive they should contact Transporting Somerset (see the contact details below) and ask for details of the Somerset Council Complaints procedure. If a student wishes to appeal against a decision made by the Council concerning entitlement to transport assistance for students with SEND, then please contact the Admissions and Entitlements team on the main Somerset Council phonenumber provided below. For all other applications

please contact Transporting Somerset who will be able to offer advice and guidance about the review process.

Information concerning all points of contact for learners seeking transport support (including website addresses).

Somerset Council, Transporting Somerset, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY.

0300 123 2224

www.somerset.gov.uk

Use of Public Transport and journey planning in Somerset – Think Travel

<https://somerset.thinktravel.info/>

Local Bus Services (Traveline) 0871 200 22 33

www.travelinesw.com

Transport /Dial-Ride services 0845 345 9155

<https://somerset.thinktravel.info/>

Information relating to bus initiatives including the Taunton Town Zone fare:

[Bus it – You know it makes sense \(somerset.gov.uk\)](http://somerset.gov.uk)

Somerset Colleges and Schools with Sixth Forms (which may also offer assistance with transport and 16-19 Bursary funds):

The Blue School 01749 678799

office@blue.somerset.sch.uk

www.theblueschoolwells.co.uk

Bridgwater & Taunton College (Bridgwater Campus) 01278 455464

info@btc.ac.uk

www.btc.ac.uk

Bridgwater & Taunton College (Taunton Campus) 01823 366366

info@btc.ac.uk

www.btc.ac.uk

Frome Community College 01373 465353

office@fromecollege.org

www.fromecollege.org

Holyrood Academy 01460 260100

office@holyrood.uat.ac

www.holyroodacademy.com

Huish Episcopi Academy 01458 250501

office@huishepiscopi.somerset.sch.uk

www.huishepiscopi.net

King Alfred School 01278 784881

info@tkasa.org.uk

www.tkasa.org.uk

The Kings of Wessex Academy 01934 742608

office@kowessex.co.uk

www.kowessex.co.uk

Midsomer Norton Sixth Form 01761 402280

sixthformadmin@msnsixth

www.msnsixth.com

Pyrland School 01823 348200
reception@pyrlandschool.com
www.pyrlandschool.com

Richard Huish College 01823 320800
hello@huish.ac.uk
www.huish.ac.uk

Somervale School 01761 414276
enquiries@somervaleschool.com
www.somervaleschool.com

The Space, Heathfield Community School 01823 412820
info@thespacesomerset.co.uk
www.thespacesomerset.co.uk

Strode College 01458 844400
courseinfo@strode-college.ac.uk
www.strode-college.ac.uk

Wadham School 01460 270123
office@wadhamschool.co.uk
www.wadhamschool.co.uk

West Somerset College 01643 706061
enquiries@westsomersetcollege.org
www.westsomersetcollege.org

Writhlington School 01761 433581
info@writhlington.org.uk
www.writhlington.org.uk

Yeovil College 01935 423921
enrol@yeovil.ac.uk
www.yeovil.ac.uk

Neighbouring Schools and Colleges

Bath College 01225 312191

info@bathcollege.ac.uk

www.bathcollege.ac.uk

Bicton College 0330 123 4782

customer.services@bicton.ac.uk

www.bicton.ac.uk

Exeter College 01392 400500

info@exe-coll.ac.uk

www.exe-coll.ac.uk

The Gryphon School 01935 813122

office@gryphon.dorset.sch.uk

www.gryphon.dorset.sch.uk

Petroc College (Tiverton Campus) 01884 235200

guidancecentretiverton@petroc.ac.uk

www.petroc.ac.uk

St Augustine's Catholic College 01225 350001

admin@sta.cc

www.st-augustines.wilts.sch.uk

Saint Gregory's Bath 01225 832873

stgregorys_sec@bathnes.gov.uk

www.st-gregorys.org.uk

Weston College 01934 411411

enquiries@weston.ac.uk

www.weston.ac.uk

Wiltshire College 01225 350035 I

info@wiltshire.ac.uk

www.wiltshire.ac.uk

Public Bus Operators providing services in Somerset

Bakers Dolphin – 01934 415000

<https://www.bakersdolphin.com/>

J.N.Baker Ltd t/a Bakers Dolphin

48 Locking Road

Weston-Super-Mare

BS23 3DN

Buses of Somerset (First South) 0345 646 0707

www.firstgroup.com/somerset

Taunton Bus Station, Tower Street, TA1 4AF

Dartline Coaches 01392 872900

info@dartline-coaches.co.uk

www.dartline-coaches.co.uk

Langdon Business Park, Clyst St Mary, Exeter, Devon, EX5 1AF

Faresaver – 01249 444444

enquiries@faresaver.co.uk

<https://faresaver.co.uk/>

The Coach Yard, Vincients Road,

Bumpers Farm Industrial Estate,

Chippenham SN14 6QA

Frome Bus 01373 471474

www.fromebus.co.uk

George's Ground, Marston Trading Estate, Frome, BA11 4RP

First West of England 0345 646 0707

www.firstgroup.com/bristol-bath-and-west

Enterprise House, Easton Rd, Bristol, BS5 0DZ

Hatch Green Coaches 01823 480338

info@hatchgreencoaches.co.uk

www.hatchgreencoaches.co.uk

Hatch Green Garage, Hatch Beauchamp, TA3 6TN

Libra Travel 01373 812255

Buckland Down Cottage, Buckland Down, Buckland Dinham, Frome, BA11 2RG

Ridlers Coaches 01398 323398

info@ridlers.co.uk

www.ridlers.co.uk

Jury Rd Garage, Dulverton, TA22 9EJ

South West Coaches 01963 33124

Info@southwestcoaches.co.uk

www.southwestcoaches.co.uk

Southgate Rd, Wincanton, BA9 9EB

Stagecoach West (including the South West Falcon from Plymouth to Bristol) –

0345 810 1000

southwest.enquiries@stagecoachbus.com

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/about/west>

Head office: Stagecoach, Matford Park Road, Exeter, EX2 8FD