

Guide to Staffordshire County Council's Post 16 Travel Assistance Scheme 2026/27

The county council provides financial support to a limited number of bus services and encourages operators to publish timetables that are suitable for school/college start and finish times. Where public transport is available, purchasing travel passes on public transport or buying into transport arranged by a school or college themselves, may be your cheapest option.

If you intend to apply for a local service bus pass or rail pass through the Post 16 Scheme, your pass will only be valid for travel on school days only. Please note this will not be a 24/7 pass and will only be valid Monday-Friday. There is no variation in price for this scheme dependant on the number of days or distance travelled – the price remains unchanged.

Support for students who live in rural areas

Students with a journey time of over 75 minutes may be eligible to assistance (see below). This is in addition to the options and support detailed elsewhere in this statement and is available to all students but will be of less benefit to those in urban areas.

Where you live in a rural area, you can also provide supporting information you wish to be considered to make your case, for example, the rural nature of your home address and how this affects your journey and why you or your parents/carers are not able to make your own travel arrangements.

Where a student in a rural area does receive post-16 travel assistance from the county council, families will make the same financial contribution as other students in urban areas taking shorter journeys. Those in rural areas may also be eligible to a mileage allowance to the nearest suitable public transport.

Support for students where the journey is over 75 minutes

Good practice from the Department for Education suggests that students may reasonably be expected to travel up to 75 minutes each way. Travel time includes time spent walking to/from stops, waiting times, driving, travelling on college- or school-arranged transport and using public transport or trains (or a combination of these). The 75 minutes does not include the waiting time between arrival at school/college and the general school/college start and end time.

If we agree to assist, this would generally be in the form of a payment of a mileage allowance per day attended for the journey from home to the nearest appropriate bus/train stop, plus provision of a public bus pass or passes. A contribution towards the cost would be required at the same rate as detailed in our post 16 transport statement (for 2026-27 this would be annual fee of £816.00 for non-low income students, reduced to £645.00 for low income students).

Applications for support in other circumstances

Applications can be made for travel assistance outside the policy, based upon individual, exceptional circumstances. Should you wish to apply on this basis please make an application using the online form and provide full details of –

- what you consider are your exceptional individual circumstances and why you consider those circumstances require assistance from the County Council;
- why you or your parents/carers are not able to make your own travel arrangements;
- all other relevant supporting information you wish to be considered to make your case (for example the rural nature of your home address and how this affects your journey).

Term Dates 2026/2027

Autumn Term	2 September 2026 – 18 December 2026
Spring Term	4 January 2027 – 25 March 2027
Summer Term	12 April 2027 – 21 July 2027

Terms and Conditions

This scheme may not be the cheapest or best option for you – always [check out your other options](#) before applying.

1. For students in year 12 and above in September 2026, support is offered to Staffordshire residents studying a full-time course at level 3 or below which began on or before the date of the students 19th birthday, with at least 16 hours of timetabled study per week. The low income criteria must also be met. Travel assistance is not given to higher education courses (level 4 and above, such as Foundation Degrees or Higher National Diplomas).
2. For students with learning difficulties and disabilities, we will continue to offer support until a course is completed providing the course was begun on or before the day of their 19th birthday. However, if you are unable to access public transport (even when accompanied) due to a learning difficulty or disability, you should apply under the [Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) travel | Staffordshire County Council](#)
3. The course must be funded by the local authority – travel assistance is not given to students paying fees for their tuition or attending a course as part of a paid apprenticeship.
4. Travel assistance is given to your catchment school or the nearest training provider with places available for the course/courses you wish to study.

5. We generally do not provide assistance if the learning provider is less than 3 miles and more than 15 miles from the home address (the distance will be measured by Staffordshire County Council using the shortest driving route). The upper and lower distance criteria may be varied due to the needs of the student's learning difficulties or disability.
6. When considering if a course is available, we take into account – the end qualification awarded, not the individual units taken; the training provider having a place available to offer to you on that course; you meet the entry requirements demanded by that training provider; that the location meets any requirements you have as a result of any learning difficulty or disability you may have.
7. Suitability of travel assistance will be determined by Staffordshire County Council – this will be based upon balancing reasonable costs and reasonable travel/waiting times and enables you to access your learning place during school/college days at the school or college general start/finish times. This could mean that you may not receive travel assistance for the quickest or most convenient transport.
8. For students with a learning difficulty or a disability, the need for specialised travel assistance and the type of travel assistance required due to an inability to walk or use public transport will be based upon information obtained from the school, college, Education, Health and Care plan and any other appropriate professional(s).
9. Students using this travel assistance scheme are expected to make their own way to the nearest pick up point/bus stop/train station up to 1 mile away from the home address or destination if required.
10. Any public bus pass issued under this scheme will provide travel at a minimum during term time only between home and your place of learning.
11. Travel assistance is not given to attend work placements or work experience.
12. We will provide travel assistance to your registered base only, to enable attendance for the general start/finish times of the academic day. Travel assistance to other sites or work placements, is not covered by this scheme. Travel assistance to your registered base outside standard hours to attend activities that are not essential to passing your course is not covered by this scheme.
13. Any travel pass issued under the scheme remains the property of Staffordshire County Council and must be returned if a student leaves school or college. Should you lose your pass a charge will be made for a replacement.
14. Should you leave your course and require a refund you must return your pass to Transport & the Connected County. Refunds will not be made until the pass has been received. An administration fee of £10 may be deducted.
15. By making an application for travel assistance, you are making an agreement with the County Council that you will make the required contribution payment. Please be aware that should you fail to keep to this agreement by not making any payment due on time, or any arrangement agreed for payment of arrears is not maintained, then the assistance we have arranged (including any

contracted transport) will be withdrawn following a 4 calendar weeks' notice period, and action will take place to recover any outstanding debt. Additionally, in the following year, the required annual contribution would need to be paid in full, and an agreement made to pay any outstanding arrears before travel assistance is arranged. If this doesn't take place, travel assistance may take the form of a payment of a mileage-based payment towards the cost of you making your own travel arrangements (usually paid in arrears), with the required annual contribution for that year deducted from the amount paid to you. We may also deduct any outstanding arrears for the previous academic year from the mileage payments.

16. Unacceptable behaviour such as fighting, bullying or foul language whilst using transport may result in the pass being withdrawn. Parents will be held responsible for any damage caused and may be charged for it.
17. It can take up to 20 working days for the pass to be issued. Claims for payment of travel costs before 20 working days after receipt of your payment and photographs where applicable will not be accepted. No backdated claims for payment will be accepted.
18. However long your course is, you must make a new application for travel assistance each year.
19. You must notify the Authority if you change address or your course of study.
20. There is no variation in price for this scheme dependant on the number of days or distance travelled – the price remains unchanged.
21. We will consider applications for assistance under exceptional circumstances. Please note, we do not generally consider work, other childcare commitments, or parental convenience as an exceptional reason alone to provide assistance. Please refer to the [Post 16 transport statement for full details](#)

Charges 2026/2027

Low income criteria

If you, or the parent or carer you live with, receive any of the following benefits, travel assistance will be offered upon payment of a contribution of £645.00 for the year.

- one of the qualifying criteria for free school meals as listed at [Free school meals | Staffordshire County Council](#) or
- the maximum amount of working tax credit (your tax credit award notice will state 'deduction due to income £0.00').

Proof of receipt will need to be provided with your application form – the appropriate evidence is detailed on our website at [Applying for free school meals | Free school meals | Staffordshire County Council](#) or provide a copy of all pages of the Tax Credit Statement TC602 if claiming on working tax credit grounds.

Charges will be as follows:

For applications on - Low Income Grounds

Term	Charge
Annual Pass	£645.00
Autumn Term	£245.00
Summer Term	£200.00
Spring Term	£200.00

For applications on - Exceptional Circumstances Grounds and the low income criteria is not met

Term	Charge
Annual Pass	£816.00
Autumn Term	£310.00
Summer Term	£253.00
Spring Term	£253.00

Please note one-way journey charges are not available for any local service or rail passes.

Payment Methods

Payments can be made annually or termly by debit or credit card payment, or by cheque or postal order using one of the following payment methods:

- Telephone: 24 hour, 7 days a week automated telephone payment system.
- On-line: Through Staffordshire County Council website.
- BACS payment: internet banking
- Post: Cheque or postal order made payable to Staffordshire County Council.
- Direct Debit: Instalment payments are available by direct debit only for payment of annual passes consisting of 8 payments commencing in September 2026. Payments can be made on 1st or 15th of each month.

Once your application has been processed and you have been allocated travel assistance, we will email and confirm this allocation and attach an invoice for payment as applicable to your chosen payment method. Alternatively, if no email address is provided, we will write to you and advise you of this information. Single payment or termly invoices must be paid within 28 days from the date the invoice is issued.

If you should decide to pay termly an invoice will automatically be forwarded to you each term unless indicated otherwise.

If you have nominated to pay by instalment a direct debit mandate will be forwarded to you with your invoice for completion and return to Staffordshire County Council.

Please indicate your chosen method of payment on your application form.

Please do not send any payment with your application form. Payment to be made following receipt of invoice.

In order to produce local service and rail passes, a quantity of passport photographs may be required. Please do not send any photographs with your initial application. We will request these where required once your application has been processed.

Please note travel arrangements will not commence, and passes will not be issued until invoices have been paid in full, or a direct debit mandate has been completed, returned and accepted.

If payments are defaulted once your pass has been issued, the County Council reserves the right to terminate travel assistance with immediate effect. This payment method will then be disallowed the following year.

Issuing of Travel Passes

In order for your request to be processed in time for the beginning of the academic year you will need to **return your application form by 1 August 2026**. Please be aware it can take up to 28 days for passes to be supplied, therefore it is imperative that payment is made on time. Students who submit a late application outside these requirements will not be able to claim for a refund of fares paid prior to the issue of a pass. Travel passes will be sent direct to the home address.

Lost Passes

If you should lose your travel pass, you can obtain a replacement pass by applying online at [Replacement school bus passes | Staffordshire County Council](#). Please note an additional fee and photographs may be required for a replacement.

If You No Longer Require Your Pass

Please return the travel pass to Transport & the Connected County immediately. **DO NOT THROW IT AWAY**. It may then be possible to reimburse you with a proportion of the contribution you have made, less a £10.00 administration charge. If passes are not returned, the Authority reserves the right to recover any loss from you.

Withdrawn Application

If your application is withdrawn prior to the issue of a travel pass, a full refund will be made.

Change of Circumstances

If your circumstances change, for example you change address, or change your course of study, you **MUST** inform the Council immediately so that your application can be reviewed.

Travel Assistance Renewal

However long your course is, you must make a new application for travel assistance each year. Information can be found at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/post16transport or telephone the numbers listed below.

For further information please contact the School Transport Team at student.transport@staffordshire.gov.uk or telephone 01785 895024

For queries regarding special needs Post 16 transport please contact the SEN Team at sentransportqueries@staffordshire.gov.uk

Hours of Business:	Monday-Thursday	08.30 – 17.00
	Friday	08.30 – 16.30

If you have any dispute regarding our decisions, [please details of our](#) appeals process

Please return your application and any supporting evidence to:

student.transport@staffordshire.gov.uk

Transport & the Connected County
Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place
Tipping Street
Stafford
ST16 2DH