

POST-16 TRAVEL ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION & TRAINING

CROYDON ANNUAL POLICY STATEMENT 2026/2027

GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN POST 16 EDUCATION & TRAINING

This policy statement is available on the Croydon Council website at www.croydon.gov.uk/education/adult/16-19-education-training-careers

Croydon Post-16 Travel Assistance Policy to Education and Training Annual Policy Statement for 2026/2027 Academic Year

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1. PURPOSE

In accordance with section 509AA of the Education Act 1996, as amended by the sections 54-57 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, this policy statement describes the arrangements for the provision of travel assistance for 16-18 year olds (sixth form age) to access appropriate education and training.

This document operates in parallel, and/or on similar principles to Croydon Local Authority's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy which covers support for children up to 16 years old. The intention of this document is to provide relevant information for students aged 16-18 and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (or in some cases up to the age of 25 if the young person has complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities) in relation to access to appropriate education and training.

Any available funds held by Croydon Council will be used solely to support learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LDD) in accordance with criteria described in section 4.

Any available support to help other learners with transport costs can be accessed via application to your school, college, training provider or the relevant funding agency.

All young people in full-time education up to the age 18 are entitled to free transport on buses and trams, plus concessionary rates on other public transport, within London. In the light of this, Croydon Authority considers that this is sufficient to meet the transport needs of most of our students. It is therefore generally expected that learners study at the nearest reasonable and appropriate centre using fare concessions and the most cost effective mode of transport.

Learners should therefore carefully consider transport cost and travel time implications when selecting their venue of study, particularly if the learning venue is outside of the London transport boundaries (e.g. Surrey or Kent Council areas) for concessionary fares.

The Council will not provide financial support for travel other than described in section 4.

2. SCOPE

2.1 Academic year

This policy covers the period 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027

2.2 Learner residency

This policy applies to anyone who is resident in the London Borough of Croydon. Learners not resident in Croydon or who are looked after by another Council, but live in Croydon, should refer to the transport policy statement issued by their home local authority or go to www.gov.uk/subsidised-college-transport-16-19

2.3 Learner age

This policy applies to young people aged over 16 but under 19 as at 31st August 2026 (or in some cases up to age 25 if they have complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLD)), and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday.

2.4 Learning venue

This policy provides for learners who are engaged in education or training at:

- a school (including academies);
- a further education institution;
- a sixth form college;
- a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education; ▪ an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) e.g. independent specialist providers for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;
- a learning provider that is funded by the LA to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to a positive outcome (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers).

3. PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CYCLING

3.1 Transport for London – free and discounted travel

3.1.1 16+ Zip Oyster Cards

Young people aged 16-17 years that live in a London borough are entitled to a 16+ Zip Oyster Card that gives:

- free bus and tram travel
- child rate 7 day, monthly or longer period travel card and bus & tram passes
- pay as you go at half the adult rate on bus, Tube, tram, DLR, London Overground and most National Rail services in London

If you are aged 18 on 31 August you may also be eligible for a 16+ Zip Oyster Card to get free bus and tram travel if you can evidence that you are still in full time education, defined as:

- At least 12 hours of guided learning per week, between 09:00-17:00, Mon to Fri
- At least 10 weeks on a further education course at Level 3
- In a sixth form college, academy, further education college or other training provider

It can also include apprenticeships and training courses funded by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), provided the student is 18 or under on 31 August. Your school, college or training provider will be able to confirm if the course qualifies.

How to apply

Applications are usually made online. For further details visit <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/travel-for-under-18s/zip-oyster-photocards> or telephone the helpline on **0343 222 1234**

3.1.2 Apprentice Oyster Photocards

If you are aged 18 or over, a London resident and enrolled on an apprenticeship, you may be eligible for an Apprentice Oyster Photocard. You can save 30% off adult-rate travelcards and bus & tram pass season tickets.

How to apply

Applications are usually made online. For further details visit <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/apprentice-oyster-photocard> or telephone the helpline on **0343 222 1234**

3.2 Young Person Rail Card

If you're between 16 and 25 years old, you're eligible. With the Railcard you'll enjoy 1/3 off rail fares when you go by train. An annual fee of £30 (or £70 for 3-years) applies.

How to apply

For more details refer to www.16-25railcard.co.uk/ or telephone **0345 3000 250**

3.3 Cycling

Cycling is an efficient, cheap, quiet, healthy and non-polluting sustainable form of transport. We seek to provide safe, convenient and clearly identified cycle facilities to make cycling easier and more fun, and also as part of our traffic management measures.

How to apply

Cycle Training

Can be booked for individuals, groups or by your school or college through www.cyclinginstructor.com/, or by the school calling **0845 652 0421**.

Cycle Guides

Free cycle route guides are available from Transport for London at:

www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/routes-and-maps

Cycle Rides

Cycling events and safe, accompanied rides for everyone from new cyclists to experienced riders are a sociable way to gain cycling confidence. See: www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/sports/a-z-ofactivities/cyclingevents and especially our programme of local Sky rides, see: goskyride.com

Cycle Storage

Most schools and colleges have secure cycle storage areas, or can apply to TfL for a grant. Students should contact their school, college or training provider for information.

Inclusive Cycling

Wheels for Wellbeing is an award-winning charity supporting disabled people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the benefits of cycling. Cycling can be easier than walking, a way to keep independent, fit and healthy, a mobility aid, and a useful form of everyday transport. Inclusive cycling means EVERYONE can cycle regardless of age, health condition or impairment." See: www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/ for information, including regular off-road sessions at Croydon Arena Albert Road, South Norwood SE25 4QL.

4. SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND/OR DISABILITIES (LDD)

4.1 Context

The Local Authority expects and encourages most learners of this age to use public transport and travel independently because of the beneficial effects this will have on the young person's development. However, we recognise that in some circumstances additional assistance with travel may be required.

Where a student has an Education Health and Care Plan, decisions will be based on parental or student application and assessment.

Croydon local authority will develop personalised travel plans for all students who are eligible for travel assistance. The personalised travel plan will be a living document that evolves as initiatives and activities are implemented and as students' travel needs change. We will be working very closely with families, young people and schools and colleges to enable alternative travel options resulting in greater service satisfaction and more positive outcomes for the young people and their families.

In most cases qualifying learners aged 16 to 18 will be offered the default position of a personal transport budget to make private travel arrangements to the nearest education establishment offering their chosen course of study. The local authority will work with families to assess the most appropriate transport solution so that learners can continue to attend their training or education. However, in certain circumstances it may be more cost effective to offer travel assistance through other means, for example, where a vehicle has an available seat that could be offered at no

incremental cost. There may also be exceptional cases where a Personal Transport Budget is not appropriate.

What is a Personal Transport Budget?

A personal transport budget is an amount of money that will help you to get a learner to college.

How does a Personal Transport Budget work?

- Each month we will transfer the young person's agreed Personal Transport Budget into your chosen bank account.
- Each year we'll review the plan with you and the college - to make sure it is the most appropriate arrangement.
- You must spend the money in a way that ensures the young person can get to college.

How can you use a personal transport budget?

- Arrange for a friend or relative to walk to college with the young person
- Drive the young person to college or share with another parent
- Get a bus pass for a friend or relative to travel with the young person
- Pay for childcare for a younger child so that you can take the young person to college
- Work with the parents to join up with the college to make suitable transport arrangements.

How much Personal Transport Budget is on offer?

This will depend on the young person's age, support needs, timetable, and the distance from home to college.

The benefits of a personal budget

- It allows you the freedom to make your own arrangements – to suit your family
- It gives you control over how the money is spent
- You can share the cost and save money by joining up with other parents
- You could use the money to help the young person to become more independent

Transport needs will be also be re evaluated in the light of the desire to establish travel independence for students wherever possible.

Croydon Council is committed to promoting independence for children and young people with special educational needs so that their experiences can be similar to those of their peers. The local authority recognises the importance of extending the range of travelling options available so that the most suitable arrangements can be made to support individual needs. It recognises that travelling to the place of learning as independently as possible is a valuable experience for young people as they grow up. In order to do this some young people with special educational needs may need extra training to help them learn the skills for greater independence.

4.2 Independent Travel Training

Independent Travel Training (ITT) helps young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to travel to school or college by walking or on public transport.

Croydon's aim is to promote a happy and healthy lifestyle through alternative means of travel where possible and appropriate, including, walking, cycling and the use of public transport. We value independence and resilience and understand that the ability to travel without the need for support is a crucial life skill that helps give a young person the freedom to fulfil their potential and live a full life.

The training will help build the young person's confidence in other areas of their life such as:

- Future job and training opportunities
- Accessing new hobbies, leisure activities and social clubs
- Social Skills

Who is eligible?

To be considered for ITT a young person must have the potential, once trained to travel to and from school/college independently. Before any training takes place we will first assess whether the young person is suitable for ITT on an individual basis.

You may be offered ITT for free as part of travel assistance provided by Croydon Council. If you are not eligible for free ITT, you may still benefit from the programme by paying for the training yourself or through other sources of funding.

What are the benefits?

Young people who successfully complete the travel training will benefit from increased confidence, independence, freedom and better opportunities to access education, training, employment and other day to day activities, whilst helping them maintain better relationships with their peers. It will also help families find time to do things independently, as well as enabling them to do more things together. This all contributes to leading a more fulfilled life for the young person and those around them.

How is the training delivered?

Parents/Carers will be involved from the outset, starting with a meeting with the travel assessor who will work with the family and student to tailor the programme to the student's needs.

The training is delivered one to one from a trained professional. Until the young person is considered capable of completing the route on their own confidently they will be accompanied at

all times. There will be regular assessments of progress which will be shared with the family. The young person will be taught the basic principles of travelling alone including the green cross code, how to get on and off transport and what to do in an emergency.

The training process consists of 4 key stages:

- Learning the route
- Travelling at peak times
- Confirming the young person is safe
- Recognising their achievement

All eligible Post-16 learners will be assessed for suitability for independent travel training. Special transport will not be provided by the local authority for pupils who are able but choose not to participate in the travel training programme.

How to apply

Please contact the Travel Assistance Case Manager on **07922582011** for further information or visit: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs/transport-and-travel-assistance/transport-and-travel-assistance-for-home-to-school-travel/independent-travel-training>

Applications for travel assistance will be considered against the following criteria:

- The learner has a disability or learning difficulty that would make it impracticable or dangerous for them to try to undertake a journey to school or college of less than 3 miles. Applications will be assessed on their own merits
- The learner has an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- The learner is aged between 16 and 19 (and in some cases up to the age of 25) and is on a course of further education at a school, college or training provider.
- The learner is attending a course that is not available at a school/college closer to the student's home address. Where a similar course is available at a closer school/college, the student will be expected to demonstrate how their chosen course meets their needs above this other similar course in order to qualify for travel assistance.
- The course is deemed to be suitable and will provide an educational benefit to the learner – as assessed by the SEN Service.
- The need for specific travel assistance has been identified in the learner's statement of special educational needs/transition or Education, Health and Care Plan.
- The learner lives more than 3 miles from school or college and is unable to undertake the journey by free public transport.
- If a learner is in receipt of a 16-19 Bursary this will be taken into account in any decision about the amount of travel assistance that may be provided.

Evidence and Information

Any relevant evidence may be considered as part of the assessment of eligibility and may include:

- Education Health and Care Plan ▪ Annual Review reports
- Information about the nature and reasonableness of the route, i.e. journey times, changes, safety, nature of roads and pavements, congestion, other passengers etc.

- Information from Social Care (initial or core assessment/CAF if appropriate)
- An existing travel training plan (or assessment being undertaken)
- Reports from other relevant professionals relating to the request for travel assistance.

Please note that the type of travel assistance offered for Post-16 learners is discretionary and could be changed in the future subject to consultation.

How to apply

Please contact the Travel Assistance Case Manager **on 07922582011** for further information relating to the application process. If deemed eligible a learner will be considered for a range of travel assistance solutions such as independent travel training or a personal transport budget as well as vehicle transport.

All applications will be considered individually and provision will be agreed on an annual basis.

4.4 Appeals

In line with statutory guidance, local authorities are required to operate an appeals process.

If an application for travel assistance is not approved by the Council, or the parent/carer disagrees with the type of assistance being offered, parent/carers have a right of appeal. The appeal should be made in writing within 20 days of the decision letter being received by the parents/carers.

Appeals are administered in 2 stages:

- Stage 1: Review by Deputy Head of Independent Travel

Within 5 working days of the appeal form being received, the parent/carer will be sent confirmation that their appeal has been received and that their appeal is under review.

Further evidence may be requested to support the appeal and consultation with case workers and professional bodies may be required. Parents should receive their decision letter within 20 days of their appeal form being received.

- Stage 2: Independent Panel - Independent review of evidence

If the parent/carer remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they should notify the Council in writing within 20 days of receiving their Stage 1 appeal decision. The appeal will then be considered independently of the service and will involve consideration of all evidence gathered and the reasons for the decision being made. This will be undertaken by the "Independent Panel" constituted by a mix of panel members independent of the process to date and suitably experienced, this may include head teachers from primary and secondary schools.

Parents should receive their decision letter within 40 days of their appeal being received.

This decision is the final stage of the Council's appeal procedure in relation to travel assistance. If parents/carers remain dissatisfied they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. Details can be provided by the Council if necessary.

During the appeals process no new travel assistance will be provided or, in the case of existing arrangements, no change will be implemented.

If after the appeal, transport is agreed, it will commence from the date of the letter sent to the parent / carer. No backdated payments will be made nor will the Council accept any claims by parents/carers for costs incurred (e.g. for making alternative transport arrangements) during the process of appeal.

4.5 Complaints

Once travel assistance has been agreed any concerns regarding the provision of the service should be made in the first instance to the Deputy Head of service or in the case of vehicle transport to Croydon Transport Services: passenger.transport@croydon.gov.uk

All complaints on the process for assessing eligibility for transport provision will be handled through the Council's formal complaints process. Full details are available on the Council's website. Any complaints regarding the outcome of the assessment process will be addressed as part of the appeals process.

5. SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR POST 16 LEARNERS

5.1 16-19 Bursary Fund

You could get a bursary to help with education-related costs if you're aged 16 to 19 and: studying at publicly funded school or college (not university) in England or on a training course, including unpaid work experience. A publicly funded school is one that does not charge you for attending it.

A bursary is money that can be used to pay for things like clothing, books and other equipment for your course, transport and lunch on days you study or train.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursary:

Vulnerable student bursary

You could get up to £1,200 if at least one of the following applies:

- you're in or recently left local authority care
- you get Income Support or Universal Credit because you're financially supporting yourself □ you get either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- you get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit

You may get the full amount if you have expenses and on a full-time course of at least 30 weeks.

You'll usually get less than the full amount, or no bursary, if one of the following apply:

- your course is shorter than 30 weeks
- you study part time
- you have few expenses

You'll be told what evidence you need, for example benefit letters.

Discretionary bursary

You could get a discretionary bursary if you need financial help but don't qualify for a vulnerable student bursary.

Education and training providers set their own criteria for discretionary bursaries, e.g. they might look at family income, and how much you get and what it's used for.

How to apply

Apply to your school, college or training provider. Ask student services or your tutor to explain what you need to do.

For more information go to www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/overview

5.2 Care to Learn

Care to Learn provides financial support to young parents (aged under 20 at the start of your course) who want to continue their education and need help with the cost of childcare and any associated travel.

Care to Learn is only available for publicly-funded courses in England. This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- sixth-forms in schools
- sixth-form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

Your learning provider can tell you if your course is eligible.

It pays up to £175 per week (if you live in London) for each child to help with the cost of:

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

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider and travel payments go direct to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

How to apply

Learners can obtain more information and request a Care to Learn application form online from www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/overview

Alternatively, you can contact the Student Bursary Support Service Helpline Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm on **0800 121 8989** or e-mail: c2l@studentbursarysupport.co.uk

5.3 16-18 Residential Bursary Fund (RBF)

The Residential Bursary Fund provides financial support towards the costs of accommodation for young people attending one of the designated providers delivering specialist provision, where their course requires the young person to be resident in order to participate because it is not available locally and/or because it requires students to be available at unsociable hours on a regular basis.

Institutions may determine their own eligibility criteria and process for considering applications for RBF support. Priority must be given to young people who are unable to access relevant learning within daily travel from their home or where the costs of such travel are prohibitive.

How to apply

Learners can find out more information at www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme/residentialbursary-fund

You should apply directly to your institution for support and/or for further information.

5.4 Residential Support Scheme (RSS)

The Residential Support Scheme provides financial support with accommodation costs for learners aged between 16 and 18, who need to live away from home to study because their course is not available locally.

Learners must meet the eligibility criteria (which includes an income assessment) in order to receive support from the Residential Support Scheme. If you are assessed as eligible, the amount of award you receive will be based on your actual accommodation costs up to a maximum award level.

How to apply

Learners can find out more information at www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme

You can request an application pack from your school/college or contact the Student Bursary Support Service Helpline Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm on 0800 121 8989 or e-mail: c2l@studentbursarysupport.co.uk

5.5 Dance and Drama Award

The Dance and Drama Award (DaDA) scheme supports talented individuals to access high-quality training at some of England's leading private dance and drama schools. Awards are granted to those students who are assessed by the school at audition as being the most talented and likely to succeed in the industry. The amount of support an individual receives depends on their household income.

To be eligible to receive DaDA funding in the 2023/2024 academic year, students must be aged between 16 and 23 at the start of the academic year (for a dance course) and aged between 18 and 23 at the start of the academic year (for an acting course).

Only students enrolled on the Trinity College London (TCL) Level 5 and 6 Professional Diplomas in Dance, Acting and Musical Theatre at one of the institutions that are part of the DaDA scheme are eligible to apply for funding.

If offered an award, the amount of support for fees and living costs will be based on an assessment of the family's household income. The income assessment will be undertaken by the appropriate DaDA school, according to national scales.

How to apply

For help and advice you should contact your DaDA school.

5.6 Discretionary Learner Support (DLS)

If you are aged 19 or over, on a further education course and facing financial hardship, you could get DLS. The money can help pay for things like:

- accommodation and travel
- course materials and equipment
- childcare - if you qualify

How to apply

You should apply directly to your institution for support or for further information, or go to www.gov.uk/discretionary-learner-support

5.7 Church Tenements Charity

The aim of the Church Tenements Charity is to provide "one off" small grants for educational purpose to young people under the age of 25 years either resident within, or studying at an establishment within, the London Borough of Croydon. In addition to the grants for educational purposes, the Trustees will consider application for recreational, social and physical training or equipment.

How to apply

Entitlement is not automatic. All applications will be considered by a committee who will decide whether to make an award of a part or full grant.

For more information contact Ms Margot Rohan on 07710 356964 (after 5:00pm) or margot.rohan@yahoo.co.uk

6. USEFUL CONTACTS

- **Church Tenements Charity: Margot Rohan 07710 356964**
- **Citizens Advice:**
www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/education/education_further_and_higher_education/ew/financial_help_for_students_aged_16-19
- **Croydon Council Travel Assistance Case Manager** :T 020 8760 5454
- **Croydon Transport Services:** T 0208 8686 2215
- **Gov.UK:** www.gov.uk/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students
- **National Careers Service:**
nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/tools/funding/Pages/default.aspx
- **National Rail:** www.16-25railcard.co.uk T 0345 3000 250 or railcardhelp@railcardsonline.co.uk
- **Student Bursary Support Service:** T 0800 121 8989 or c2l@efalearnersupport.co.uk
- **Transport for London:** www.tfl.gov.uk T 0343 222 1234 Textphone 0800 1123456

7. COMMENTS

Any comments relating to this policy should be sent to:

Jackie Wright
Deputy Head of Service – Independent Travel

jackie.s.wright@croydon.gov.uk