

Westmorland and Furness Council

Post 16 Education Travel Bursary Scheme

2026/2027

1 Summary

- The Council has committed £200k for the 2026/2027 academic year to help pay for travel to education and training for young people aged 16 to 19
- The bursary is intended for young people who are experiencing difficulty in paying for transport for educational/training purposes. It is not intended for households where there is an additional rate taxpayer
- Journeys made by home to school transport through the Post 16 spare seat scheme, other school/college arranged transport, public transport (bus and rail), taxi's, bicycles and/or fuel costs for private transport are covered by the scheme
- This scheme runs for the 2026/2027 academic year. Claims can be made at the start of the Autumn term 2026
- The application window will be open from GCSE results day 20th August 2026 until noon on 1st October 2026. **The Council reserves the right to temporarily close the scheme earlier than this date if it is likely to be over-subscribed**

2 Criteria

This Travel Bursary has the following conditions:

- Applicants must be under the age of 19 on 31 August 2026
- Applicants must live within the Westmorland and Furness area
- Applicants must incur travel costs to access education, training and learning opportunities
- Support for students using public transport or a combination of public and private transport is the Council's first preference

Funding will be allocated in the following priority order:

- Students who received the bursary in 2025/26 and are going into the second/third year of their course
- Cared for Children and Care Leavers
- Young People with an EHCP who are enrolled on a supported internship
- All other applicants on a first come, first served basis

3 How much is available per application?

The amount of bursary awarded is assessed on an individual case by case basis and is dependent on mode(s) of transport, frequency of travel and how far away the student lives from their place of education:

- Students who travel more than 20 miles in a single journey on public transport to their place of education are eligible for a maximum sum of £500. This value will be pro-rata, dependent on the number of days attending college or school

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- Students who travel between 10 and 20 miles in a single journey on public transport to their place of education are eligible for a maximum sum of £300. This value will be pro-rata, dependent on the number of days attending college or school
- Students who travel up to 10 miles in a single journey on public transport to their place of education are eligible for a maximum sum of £160. This value will be pro-rata, dependent on the number of days attending college or school
- Students must live more than 3 miles from their chosen educational establishment to qualify for the bursary scheme
- Students who are purchasing a Post 16 “spare seat” on Westmorland and Furness Council’s spare seat scheme at a cost of £867.03 are eligible for a flat-rate payment of £200 which will be deducted from the cost of a spare seat for the Spring Term 2027. In the event of the student leaving the Post 16 studies prior to the end of October 2026, then a proportion of the bursary will be recouped from the applicant
- Students who intend to travel on private school or college arranged transport are eligible for a bursary payment at a flat rate of £200. Applicants must reference their intention to do so on their application
- A bursary payment to support the costs of travel by car, taxi or moped up to the upper end of the payment range will only be considered where individuals are unable to make use of public transport due to reasons of availability, rurality or practical logistics. 12 pence per mile will also be payable for anyone travelling by taxi, car or moped. The maximum bursary payment will be capped at £1,000. This goes towards the fuel costs of the journey. Payment will only be made for one return journey per day based on the timetabled expected number of days of travel over the academic year
- Students who travel out of county for their education, where the commute takes place on a Sunday and a Friday, with the students boarding out of Cumbria in the town of their education during the week, the bursary payment will be based on the following criteria
 - Weekly boarding private transport - 12 pence per mile will be made available for anyone travelling by taxi, car or moped and contributes towards the fuel costs of the journey made on Sunday and Friday. Payment will be made for two return journey per week. The maximum bursary payment will be capped at £1,000
 - Weekly boarding public transport – Students who travel on a Sunday and Friday on public transport to their place of education outside Cumbria and then stay in the town during the week are eligible for a maximum sum of £500
- Students who travel by a combination of public transport and private transport (car/moped) full details of the route to and from the place of education must be documented in the application
- For students who travel by bicycle to school/college, a £300 bursary payment will be made available
- For students who travel by a combination of public transport and private transport (car/moped/taxi) full details of the route to and from the place of education should be documented in the application. The bursary will be calculated based on a combination of the private and public routes, in line with the above criteria

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- Bursary payments will be made in one instalment for the whole academic year from mid-October 2026 onwards
- For households with more than one student travelling by car to the same place of education on the same days, only one application per household will be accepted
- Dependent on interest and the volume of applications received this scheme may be closed prior to 1st October

4 Low Income Support

Students who meet the following criteria may be eligible for free home to school transport:

- Under the age of 19 years on 31 August 2026
- Have applied for a full time course (minimum of 17 hours per week)
- Live over 3 miles from their nearest/catchment 6th Form or
- Live over 3 miles from their nearest college offering the vocational course they have been accepted to study on
- Households eligible for targeted free school meals (FSM)
- Households eligible for expanded free school meals (FSM)

For full information please visit: www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk and search for Post 16 Transport: Low Income Families 2026 to 2027 academic year.

5 Application process

An electronic application form will be required from all applicants to this scheme. This form is available online on the Westmorland and Furness Council's Integrated Home to School Transport website.

The Council will aim to reach a decision within 15 working days of the submission of your application. If your application is successful, then we will make a payment to you from mid-October 2026 onwards.

Applicants should not rush their application and take time to ensure all questions have been answered clearly and correctly with the appropriate evidence provided. If not, then this is likely to slow down the process of getting bursary funding out to young people or could lead to the bursary application being refused for failure to provide the correct information in the requested format.

An online application for the bursary fund will be made available via email – school.transport@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk . Any queries can be directed to the same email address.

It is important that you provide all the information accurately and truthfully and provide all the supporting documents that are requested. Failure to do so could lead to your application being declined or significantly delayed.

You will be asked to provide a copy of your offer letter/confirmation that you are enrolled onto a course or sixth form studies. Failure to provide the evidence requested will result in a delay to your application being processed.

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You must answer all questions honestly when completing your application, if the Council suspects any young person is trying to fraudulently claim the bursary, it will investigate accordingly with sanctions being taken as appropriate.

The Bursary has £200k available. If there is significant take up that may lead to demand exceeding the current level of funding in the Bursary, then the bursary scheme will be paused and applications processed until the available funding is fully allocated.

6 Appeals Process

Appeals will be accepted for consideration if any applicants who do not meet the criteria consider they have a specific case that needs further consideration. Any appeals on a refusal of an application should be directed to school.transport@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk providing full information of your appeal grounds and the full breakdown of the journey.

The Council's interpretation of this document is at its own discretion and it will be the final arbiter of the definitions contained within this policy and regarding any decision made.

7 What evidence will I need to provide?

The Council is relying on young people to be honest and open with the Council and present to us their evidence of need and eligibility for the Travel Bursary Scheme. Failure to provide the following evidence, including names, dates and addresses where requested, will result in a delay to your application.

As part of your application, you will need to provide the following information:

Information	Evidence Required	Comment
Payment details	Copy of bank statement clearly showing name, address, sort code and account number of applicants	This must match the name of the individual listed on the application This can be either the student or their parent/guardian If you use internet banking, you can download a statement via your banking app
Evidence of attendance at local college	Offer letter from said college/ school and GCSE results confirming conditions of offer have been met OR Letter from the school/college confirming you are a current pupil OR Photo of School/College ID card for the academic year	The evidence should confirm the student's name, the student's attendance for the year 2026 and their home address

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8 Other Subsidy/financial support

The bursary is only available to students who have not received any other funding for their school/college transport costs. It is expected that students contact their Post 16 provider to apply for any other costs under the student support fund. Spot checks will be carried out.

9 Data Protection

We are committed to protecting your personal data and privacy and to complying with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and other privacy laws. The information you supply on this form may be shared with our contractors and partners, who help to deliver our services. We will only retain your personal data for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes it was collected for, after which time it will be securely deleted. For more information on how we protect your personal data, see our [Privacy Notice](#).

10 Right to update the policy

The Council reserves the right to update and change this policy without notification or prior warning in the event that the government updates or changes its guidance to us or in the event of an error or omission.