



Travel Passes and Funds

Policy and Procedures 2025/2026

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1. Policy Statement

The College is committed to providing financial support for students in a range of ways under the guidance of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). As part of this process the College will operate a Travel Pass and Travel Funds scheme. This Policy is inclusive of all students, including those from underrepresented or marginalised groups. The College is committed to ensuring that no student is disadvantaged in accessing travel support due to their gender identity, disability, ethnicity, religion or any other protected characteristic.

2. Travel Passes

Full time students at the College will be eligible to apply for a travel pass. Sections 2.1 – 2.3 outline and categorise the various age groups. The calculation of distances is based on the shortest walking distance, as measured by Google maps.

2.1 16-19 Bursary (ESFA funded courses)

Walking Distance	Age	Eligibility
3 miles +	16-19	All
1-3 miles	16-19	MTB or household income of less than £25,000 net

For those students aged 16-19 (1-3 miles) means testing household income must be less than £25,000 (net) or must be in receipt of means tested benefit.

All 16-19 year old students (3 miles+) will be eligible for a pass however they will be required to have their household income assessed to allow the College to use funds from appropriate funding streams.

For full details of the funds please see 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy and Procedures 2025/2026.

For further information you can contact the Student Hub by telephone on 01704 392704 or by email at guidance@southport.ac.uk.

2.2 19+ Discretionary & Adult Learner Loans (ESFA funded courses)

Walking Distance	Age	Eligibility
1 mile +	19+*	MTB or household income of less than £38,500 (net) *

**Students enrolled on a Level 3 or above loan funded course that are liable for tuition fees are eligible to apply only if they have taken out an Advanced Learner Loan.*

For those students aged 19+ (1-3 miles) means testing household income must be less than £38,500 (net) or must be in receipt of means tested benefit.

For students 19+ the full cost of the travel pass, will be funded through the 19+ Learner Support Fund or Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund. Students must be able to demonstrate they are within a priority group, on a means tested benefit or have a household income of less than £38,500 (net).

For full details of eligibility groups please see 19+ Learner Support Fund Policy and Procedures 2025/2026' and 'Advanced Learner Loans Fund Policy and Procedures 2025/2026'.

3. Apprentices aged 19-24

The Apprentice Travelcard means young people enrolled in apprenticeships can get half price on train travel across Merseyside when buying weekly and monthly Railpass tickets.

<https://www.merseyrail.org/tickets-passes/apprentice-travelcard.aspx>

4. Types of Passes

The College will look to fund the most cost effective form of transport. The College offers students who are eligible for a travel pass the option of applying for an Arriva Student Saver travel pass, Merseyrail train pass or TRIO (where applicable). Where students live in an area not covered by the passes listed they are able to apply for travel funds (see section 7).

5. Withdrawal from a course

If a student withdraws from or does not start their course they must return their travel pass within:

- 2 weeks of the course start date (in the case of a student not starting the course)
- 2 weeks of leaving the course
- 2 weeks of transferring to a part time course

Passes must be returned by hand to the Student Hub or sent 'recorded delivery'.

Students must also inform the College if their address changes prior to the pass expiring as entitlement to the pass may be affected and students will be liable for any lost rebate.

6. Lost, stolen or destroyed tickets.

If a ticket is lost, stolen or destroyed students must inform the College immediately and request a form to apply for a duplicate ticket. The cost of a duplicate ticket can vary from £10 for Merseyrail to £25 for Arriva and Stagecoach and £5 for Trio Merseytravel, depending on the type of ticket issued and may need to be paid for by the student. We will aim to issue a duplicate ticket approximately 2 days after receiving the necessary documents and/or fee. Travelling expenses incurred whilst waiting for the duplicate ticket may not be refunded. Any duplicate tickets that are required will need to be agreed by the Student Finance Co-ordinator or Head of Student Services and the relevant fee if

necessary, will be applied. In some circumstances we will only issue travel funds to reimburse the cost, this will only be refunded on production of travel receipts that correspond to days attended.

7. Eligibility for Travel Funds

7.1 Students in Further Education

For full time students who live outside of the areas where passes are available the College operates a limited subsidised travel costs fund for students. Funds are limited and therefore this fund is allocated on a first come first served basis.

Students must meet the following criteria:

- Enrolled on a full time Southport College course
- Live more than 1 mile from College (measured by shortest walking distance on google maps)
- Not able to apply for a travel pass
- Not entitled to assistance with travel costs from another source
- Household income will be assessed as per travel passes for all age groups of students

For students living in Burscough and the surrounding area they can apply for the cost of their return ticket:

If students are eligible they will be issued 5 half termly payments linked to attendance. Payments will be made at the start of each term and attendance checked retrospectively from the 2nd term. The subsequent payments that are linked to attendance will only be stopped following a discussion with the Welfare Officer or Head of Student Services. This is to ensure that students are getting the correct support and not disadvantaged for situations out of their control.

- 90% attendance or above – full amount payable
- 75% – 89% attendance – 75% of half-termly allocation to be paid
- 75% - 65% - 50% of half termly allocation to be paid
- Below 65% - no funds to be paid.

For students aged 19+ applications can be made to the Discretionary Learner Support fund for assistance with other travel expenses e.g. fuel, 25p per mile per timetabled day (this will be capped at the cost of the cheapest ticket / pass available on public transport.)

8. Application Process and Documentary Evidence

The application process for funds will be open from early July 2025 and until such time as funds be used up. All applications will be considered based on the funding available.

Pay My Student

For all funding, including applications for travel passes, students must complete an application using the on line student support bursary service, Pay My Student. Documentary evidence is required to make an assessment of income and / or identification of being in a priority group (as laid down in the ESFA guidance). This could be pay slips, P60, proof of earning for self-

employment, bank statements, Tax Credit Award Notice, Universal Credit monthly statement, proof of benefits (letters from DWP / Job Centre) this list not exhaustive.

The 'application date' will be the date the completed form is received along with all relevant documentation.

9. Appeals

Any student, who is dissatisfied with the decision made regarding the allocation of a travel pass or travel funds, may appeal in writing to the Head of Student Services within 15 term time days of receipt of letter.

The Student Finance Co-ordinator will present the information to the panel. The Appeals Panel will be made of a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Head of Student Services and the Finance Manager.

The student will be informed of the decision of the Panel within 10 term time days of receipt of the letter of appeal.

10. Essential Elements

This policy and procedures will operate as a transparent, consistent system, with clear criteria for eligibility, allowing funds to be targeted to those students in financial hardship within the ESFA guidelines. This is ensured by:

- Procedures / guidelines for staff, updated annually
- Staff training and development meetings

A variety of methods will be used to publicise the availability of travel passes and subsidies, including the application procedure and appeals procedure. This includes:

- Financial information booklet – updated annually, available on line and within the Student Hub
- Admissions / offer letters
- Information from admissions tutors at course discussions
- Information at the point of enrolment
- Information at Induction
- Posters, media screens and information advertising funds

11. Confidentiality, data protection and retention

All personal and sensitive information will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.

The Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are not only restrictions on disclosure of information about the College, but they are also bound by a common law duty of confidentiality. This duty prevents the College from releasing information about students or other

stakeholders, without their consent. This duty applies to manual records as well as information held on computers.

Information which must be treated as confidential includes the names and addresses of students and any other information about them which is not publicly known, i.e. “personal data”. Accordingly, to ensure that the College does not breach its duty, no information, even if it only exists in printed form, should be disclosed unless all the relevant procedures have been followed.

All documents are held for the assessment of eligibility to the fund and audit purposes only. All information will be stored securely and treated sensitively. All documents will be kept by the College for 6 years.

12. Policy Update

The procedures will be reviewed annually and are the responsibility of the Head of Student Services.

13. Other Sources of Funding

The College operates or has links to a number of other sources of funding. For further details of any of the funds listed below please contact the Student Hub.

- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund (Including 19+ Childcare funding)
- 16-19 Bursary Fund
- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund
- Charitable Trusts e.g. Pinecone Trust, Bishop David Sheppard Trust

Useful Contacts

Student Finance Team - studentfinance.team@southport.ac.uk

Student Hub – 01704 392704