

# WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Draft Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

2019-2020

# **West Sussex County Council Transport Policy Statement for Students aged 16-25 yrs**

**This Policy Statement is for young people aged 16-18 in further education (known as sixth form age) and young adult learners aged 19 and over in further education with an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan.)**

**Department Responsible: Education and Skills**

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## **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Aims and Objectives
3. Transport and travel support
  - 3.1 Concessionary tickets for young people 16-25 from public transport providers
  - 3.2 Travel support from schools and colleges
4. The 16-19 Bursary Fund
5. Young parents/Care to Learn
6. LA support for young people without special educational needs or a disability
7. LA support for learners with special educational needs or a disability
  - 7.1 Eligibility criteria
  - 7.2 Low income criteria
  - 7.3 Post-19 Young Adult Learners
8. Refunds
9. Travel training
10. LA support in other circumstances
11. Travelling to a course beyond the local authority area
12. Additional eligibility criteria
13. Applying for LA transport support
14. Appeals

## **1. Introduction**

Most young people make their own arrangements to get to their school or college. This document sets out what support and schemes are available to students. This includes commercially available discounts, financial assistance to help plan the journey to school/college and, in exceptional circumstances, where the council will make arrangements usually for students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND.)

Local Authorities do not have to provide free (or subsidised) Post-16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the support that West Sussex County Council considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post-16 learners receiving education or training. This is written in accordance with section 509 of the Education Act 1996. This policy statement also includes relevant young adult learners with an EHCP.

Travel support for young people carrying on their education Post-16 does not automatically continue.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

The policy seeks to ensure that students from West Sussex are able to continue in further education and are able to access information to help them to do so, such as transport provision, planning and financial support with transport costs. The policy statement gives information about the schemes and support available within West Sussex.

This Policy Statement gives contact details and links to transport information, travel concessions or products and the assistance available for:

1. Young people of sixth form age
2. Young people of sixth form age with an EHCP
3. Young adult learners aged 19+ with an EHCP

For the purposes of this document, a person is of sixth form age if they are aged 16-18 (or have started their course before they turned 19 and continue to attend that course) and are referred to as Post-16 students. Young adult learners are those who are aged 19+ and have an EHCP.

This policy document specifies the support that West Sussex County Council considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post-16 learners receiving education or training.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of

learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

The current Home to School Transport Policy is available [here](#).

**For information on current transport options, travel concessions and products on public transport please see attached 'Supporting Documents' as part of the consultation.3. Transport and Travel Options**

### **3. Transport and Travel Support**

#### **3.1 Concessionary tickets for young people 16-25**

'Travel Concessions 2019/20' shows details of public transport operators and the travel concessions/products currently offered. These will be updated as details of the prices and offers are known.

Most bus operators offer student discounts. These are run by the operator to their own terms and conditions.

In the winter of 2018 a new national rail discount for September 2019 was announced. Details are awaited. It is likely that the Sussex Student card (see below) will be discontinued.

The Sussex Student Card (under review) – Full time students, who attend maintained schools and colleges (those funded through local or central government) travelling by rail are able to obtain up to 34% discount when purchasing season tickets online from Southern Railway. Details are available in the supporting documents and on the school transport website.

The [Disabled Person's Bus Pass](#) offers free travel on buses at any time of day. Students of any age with a physical or learning difficulty may be eligible. There is no restriction for West Sussex residents using the Disabled Person's Bus Pass as long as the journey starts or finishes in West Sussex. More information and the application form are available by visiting the link above.

Students will also find the [TravelineSouthEast](#) website helpful for planning any public transport journeys to and from school and college, or [National Rail Enquiries](#) for those travelling only by train. A 16-25 Railcard costs £30 and saves 1/3 on rail fares throughout Great Britain for a year.

Many of the concessions/products have been put in place by transport operators following input from the council, even where no funding is provided by the council for the scheme. They are able to be accessed by any student, including apprentices and young people who are not in education or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET are able to access. The Council's approach to sustainable travel to school and college is contained in the sustainable modes of transport strategy which is published within the Information for Parents document p. 39- [here](#).

### **3.2 Travel support from schools and colleges**

Chichester College ([Brinsbury Campus](#)), [Plumpton College](#) and [Collyers College](#) have organized their own buses. Tickets can be purchased directly from the colleges and the details are uploaded by the individual colleges on their own websites.

School Contacts 2019/20 (found in the Supporting Documents) contains contact details for schools and colleges.

### **4. The 16-19 Bursary Fund**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so that they can remain in education. There are two types of bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 for young people defined in specific groups e.g those in care, care leavers, those in receipt of Income support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support; those in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance and Disability of Personal Independence Payments in their own right. The eligibility criteria are [here](#).
2. Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, book and equipment.

School and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their school or college to make an application. This applies equally to apprentices or those who are currently, or in danger of becoming, NEET.

### **5. Young parents/Care to learn**

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per week, whilst you are learning.

The details of the scheme including the applicable types of childcare, details of payment and eligibility are at [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn)

### **6. LA Support for young people without Special Educational needs or Disabilities (SEND)**

Students who live in rural areas and who attend schools with sixth forms are offered access to school contract buses. There is a charge of £630 for those who do not qualify for free travel. The service is available at the beginning and end of the school day and in some cases a 'late bus' service also operates. The service is subject to the availability of places where alternative public transport exists.

Schools and colleges may also offer discretionary help from other sources, such as the 16-19 Bursary fund, local trusts, diocesan funds, school or college

budgets etc. Assessments would be discretionary at local level. Students should enquire about the possibility of help and apply direct to the school or college offering the chosen course.

Care leavers are also assessed through their individual pathway plans.

## **7. LA Support for learners with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).**

Most young people with SEND make their own arrangements to get to their school or college and can use the travel support for those without SEND.

The County Council offers help with transport costs to Post-16 students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who have an EHCP. These students may not be able to use public transport and/or may have long and expensive journeys to access the nearest suitable course to their home. The 2019/20 Post-16 Transport Policy will be available on the council's website but for the purposes for the consultation the draft Post-16 Transport Policy Extract 2019/20 is included with the other 'Supporting Documents' on the HaveYourSay website.

### **7.1 Eligibility criteria**

The eligibility criteria for the Post-16 and Young Adult Learner Home to School/College Policy (see 'Supporting Documents' for Policy Extract) states that to be eligible for assistance a student would usually have an EHCP, be attending the closest suitable school/college doing the course (or a comparable course), live over 3 miles away and be a resident of West Sussex.

If eligible, transport assistance may be offered in the form of a mileage payment, bus or train pass, or in exceptional circumstances, a taxi.

An annual application for transport assistance must be made, **even if the student is remaining at the same school/college**. The Post-16 current on-line **application form** is available at [www.westsussex.gov.uk/Post-16transport](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/Post-16transport)

The revised form will be available from May 2019 for courses starting in September 2019. Applications should be made as soon as possible in June and July. **Applications after 14 July 2019 may lead to transport assistance not being in place for the start of term.** Parents will need to plan how their students will get to school/college for the start of term.

From September 2019 the contribution towards transport costs for those who are eligible for transport assistance is £630 per annum. The contribution must be agreed before passes are provided or transport is put in place. Payment can be made in instalments.

Eligible students may be offered a mileage payment, a bus or train pass, or in exceptional circumstances, a taxi. All applications are assessed on an

individual basis.

The size of the contribution has been set after having regard to the cost of travelling to a school/college by bus, the average cost of council provided transport to mainstream schools and what other authorities charge. The average cost to the council for a contract coach or public bus pass is nearly £700. Other local authority contributions are similar, with some asking for up to £1,300 per year. In comparison, the average cost of specialist transport for a pupil with SEND is over £6,000 per year.

For families on a low income no contribution is required.

Transport assistance to the work element of Supported internships may be funded through the Access to Work fund available from colleges.

## **7.2 Low income criteria**

The County Council offers free transport to Post-16 students with SEND who have an EHCP and who meet the eligibility criteria where families are in receipt of:

- Income Support or
- Job Seekers' Allowance (Income Based) or
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) or
- Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, with an annual Inland Revenue assessed income below £16,190 (subject to review) or
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit or
- Working Tax credit run on or
- Support from the National Asylum Support Service under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400

N.B. The definition of a family on a low income may be changed following the government's review of the benefit system or future guidance.

## **7.3 Post-19 (Young Adult Learners) with an EHCP**

The County Council also offers limited help with transport to young adult learners (aged 19 and above) with an EHCP. They must meet the same eligibility criteria for assistance with transport as students of sixth form age.

When young adults with an EHCP meet the qualifying criteria and are eligible for assistance no direct charge is made.

If you have an existing social worker, please contact them to discuss whether assistance may be available. Those without a social worker should contact the Adults Services Carepoint on 01243 642121 to discuss what help may be available.

A new application process is being devised to make the system similar for both 16-19s and young adult learners (19+) and is likely to be based on the current

Post-16 transport application form. If, following consultation, this is implemented it would be available online for students attending colleges from September 2020.

For both Post-16 students and young adult learners every application is considered on an individual basis.

## **8. Refund Policy**

If a student has paid the Post-16 contribution and then no longer requires transport assistance then a refund would be offered if the amount contributed is over and above the cost spent on the transport to date. Any remaining contribution would be refunded. An email requesting a refund can be sent to [Post16travel@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Post16travel@westsussex.gov.uk)

## **9. Travel Training**

Many schools and colleges include independent travel training for students with SEND. Where appropriate, training is provided by schools for students prior to reaching the end of Year 11 in preparation for attending college. Colleges and special schools work with parents and students, encouraging them to take responsibility and to help with independent travel training. Please note that if travel training is offered and refused then travel assistance can be withdrawn. In addition some voluntary groups e.g. parent carer support groups, also offer travel training for young people.

To support this, the County Council can arrange training for staff and volunteers in schools, colleges and voluntary groups to enable them to deliver effective independent travel training to young people.

Special schools and colleges continue to work with young people, where appropriate, using PITT (Programme for Independent Travel Training) or their own programme.

## **10. LA Support in other circumstances**

The County Council also offers the following help:

Where a student with an EHCP reaches 19 whilst on a course and is receiving support with transport costs, the help will continue until the end of the course, if they meet the usual eligibility criteria during this time.

Where a student with an EHCP is not eligible for help at the start of the course and family circumstances change, e.g. because they have moved home and may qualify on grounds of distance etc., an application for support may be made as long as the student was under 19 on 1<sup>st</sup> September before the beginning of the course.

Help and advice with transport may be given to care leavers on an agreed course, at least to the age of 21, subject to assessment by the Leaving Care Service.

In all cases each application for assistance will be considered individually.

### **11. Travelling to a course beyond the local authority area**

Any learner in full time education is eligible for assistance if attending the nearest establishment offering the appropriate course if it is more than 3 miles away by the shortest walking route. This includes out of county establishments.

If a learner aged 16-19 with SEND attends the nearest appropriate placement to meet needs and the distance criteria as stated in the Home to School/College Transport Policy are met, then transport provision is made (i.e. free/assisted home to school transport). For post 19 learners, learners and parents should seek advice from their social worker or speak to Adult Services if they are unable to travel independently to a place of education.

### **12. Additional eligibility criteria**

Transport assistance is provided to one address; if there is a 50/50 split of residence under a court order, the household receiving any child benefit would be considered the main address.

If a student/young person with SEND is travelling outside the county for their school/college placement then the same eligibility criteria for Post-16 and Post-19 transport assistance apply.

### **13. Applying for LA Transport Support**

Post-16 Transport for those with EHCPs should be applied for annually, even if the student/young person is remaining at the same school/college.

There is a Post-16 contribution for students of 6<sup>th</sup> Form age of £630 for 2019-20, which is subject to annual review. If you are a family on a low income then the contribution will not have to be paid. A Payment Options form will be sent out if the contribution is applicable, which needs to be completed and returned before transport assistance is arranged.

The link to the application form for those of sixth form age is [here](#).

The revised form will be available from May 2019 for courses starting in September 2019. Applications should be made as soon as possible in June and July. **Applications after 14 July 2019 may lead to transport assistance not being in place for the start of term.** Parents will need to plan how their students will get to school/college for the start of term.

If a hard copy is required then please contact the Pupil Support Office at [Post-16transport@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Post-16transport@westsussex.gov.uk) or telephone 0330 2223588.

Those students who would like transport assistance and will be **starting a new**

**course after the age of 19** should contact their social worker.

#### **14. Appeals**

For Post-16 students with EHCPs queries re eligibility should be addressed in the first instance to the Pupil Support Office at [Post16travel@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Post16travel@westsussex.gov.uk) or 0330 2223588. If still not satisfied a stage one appeal may be made to the Director of Education and Skills, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex. Every effort will be made to resolve complaints but in some cases it may be necessary to refer the matter to a panel of elected members (stage two appeal).

#### **List of Supporting Documents**

- Post-16 Home to School and College Transport Policy Extract 2019-20
- Travel Concessions 2019-20
- School and college contacts 2019-20
- Other contacts for services offering support 2019-20