

West Sussex County Council – Post 16 Transport Policy Assistance with Travel/Transport Costs – 2018/2019

You may wish to apply for help through your establishment's 16-19 Bursary Fund if you **do not** meet the eligibility criteria below, for example, because you do not have special educational needs and/or disabilities. More details about this are available from your school or college.

If you are a student of sixth form age¹ with **Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)**, who will be attending a course appropriate to your needs in September 2018, the County Council might offer help with transport to school, sixth form college or college of further education. Normally you will have a Post-16 Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in order to be eligible for help.

Eligibility

Students with **SEND** will be provided with free transport in the following circumstances:

- 1.** Where the proposed further education course, or comparable course, or a course appropriate to the level of needs², is at the nearest maintained school/college to the student's home address **and**
- 2.** the course is full-time³ **and**
- 3.** the shortest available walking route⁴ from home to school/college is three miles or more, or the transport needs are specifically detailed in the learning disability statement or a Post-16 EHCP **and**
- 4.** the student has lived in the United Kingdom, for reasons other than education, throughout the three years ending 31st August 2018 and has settled status in the United Kingdom **and**
- 5.** the parent/carer (s)⁵ is in receipt of one or more of the following⁶ (evidence of benefits received must be sent with the application):
 - Income Support
 - Job Seeker's Allowance (Income Based)
 - Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)
 - Child Tax Credit but not also Working Tax Credit, with an annual Inland Revenue assessed income below £16,190
 - Maximum level of Working Tax Credit (no reduction due to level of income)
 - Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
 - Universal Credit.

Where a student meets 1 to 4 of the above criteria but not 5, parents will be charged £600⁷ per year towards the cost of the transport.

¹A person receiving education or training at an establishment, is of sixth form age if s/he is over compulsory school age but:

- a) is under the age of 19 or
- b) has begun a particular course of education at the establishment before reaching the age of 19 and continues to attend that course.

²For a student with SEND, this would be a course appropriate to the needs of the young person.

³A course is regarded as full time when it consists of at least 540 planned hours per year. This might include non-qualification hours such as work experience which the provider has planned, organised and supervised.

⁴The shortest walking route is measured using any available footpaths, bridleways, tracks and roads.

⁵Eligibility will be based on parental income unless the student lives independently.

⁶The criteria for eligibility may be changed following the government's review of the benefit system.

⁷Subject to annual review – £600 refers to the contribution from September 2018.

Is transport provided?

The County Council expects students to travel by public transport where it is available. We understand that some students are not able to use public transport and some may need independent travel training to enable them to start using buses or trains. In some cases, parents will be able to give training and in others, schools and colleges will provide it. A **taxi will not be provided** where a young person is assessed as being able to undertake independent travel training and the parent refuses permission for the young person to take part.

You may be eligible for a Disabled Person's Bus Pass, which gives you free travel on bus services. If so, the County Council will expect you to apply for the pass and to use it to get to and from school or college if you are able and if there is an available bus service.

Where help with travel is agreed, it will be by one or more of the following, as appropriate:

- a) provision or reimbursement of the cost of a rail or bus season ticket (unless eligible for a Disabled Person's Bus Pass);
- b) a place on a contract or school bus;
- c) a mileage allowance, where travel by car is agreed;
- d) by taxi, **in exceptional cases only**, usually for students with severe disabilities;
- e) a contribution towards the cost of travel.

If you are eligible, it is normally possible for the Local Authority to order a season ticket on your behalf, but in some cases you may be required to purchase a ticket for which you will be reimbursed.

If you are likely to be travelling by **Stagecoach Bus** (with a season ticket ordered by the County Council) or a **school contract bus**, you may be asked to send a **passport style photograph** if your application is accepted.

Raising of the participation age

From Summer 2013, changes were made which raised the age to which young people must continue their education or training. They will have to continue their education or training until at least their 18th birthday.

However, this does not mean that young people must stay at school or college or that a student is entitled to free transport beyond Year 11. They will be able to choose from:

- full-time education (e.g. at a school or college)
- an apprenticeship or traineeship
- part-time education or training combined with one of the following:
 - employment or self-employment for 20 hours or more a week
 - volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

Help with transport is **not** offered to young people in part-time training or education, or to those on apprenticeships, including Programme Led Apprenticeships.

General information

- Travel assistance is not normally provided for retakes or repeat periods of study.
- If your family income seems too high for you to qualify for free transport at the beginning of the year but your family circumstances change, i.e. because of redundancy, illness or divorce, please write to the address at the end of these notes with full details of the situation. Further consideration will then be given to your case.
- You may have already started travelling to school or college. If you wish to be reimbursed for the costs incurred, you must keep safe any receipts for tickets already bought. Reimbursement will normally be backdated only to the beginning of the term in which the application was received. Travel expenses are reimbursed on the basis of the most economical rate, which may not cover your costs fully.
- If you are not entitled to support or you arrange your own transport, you will wish to travel by the most economical route, using all available discounts and season tickets. Some of the most commonly used are shown below:
 - ◆ Sussex Student Card discount on rail season tickets for West Sussex students;
 - ◆ "Unizone" rail tickets for use on the South Coast line;
 - ◆ Student tickets from bus operators;
 - ◆ Concessionary seats available on County Council contract bus routes.

Applying for help

If you think you are eligible for help with transport from the County Council, please apply online on the website www.westsussex.gov.uk/schooltransport and apply on the Post-16 link. If you need help in completing the form, the **SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)** may be able to help you (helpline number 0330 2228555).

A fresh application must be made each school/college year.

If you are eligible for support you will be sent a letter explaining how your support will be provided and whether you or your parents will be charged. The charge will be made if you do not meet the financial criteria (in para 5). Payments can be made monthly, in two termly instalments or in full.

Please note: the charge is a contribution towards the costs. It is not reduced because a student travels only three days each week, or starts a course late, for example.

If you are not happy with the decision about your entitlement to help with transport...

Complaints should be addressed in the first instance to the Pupil and Student Support Office. If still not satisfied, an appeal (Stage One) may be made to the Director of Education and Skills, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1RF. 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).

Contact details:

Pupil and Student Support 0330 222 3588

Post16transport@westsussex.gov.uk **www.westsussex.gov.uk**

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