

Transport policy statement for learners aged 16-18 in further education and continuing learners aged 19 and over (young people of sixth form age).

Name of Local Authority: West Sussex County Council

Department Responsible: Education and Skills

1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives

The [policy notes](#) give the details of support available from the County Council and the eligibility criteria. The County Council's policy offers help with transport costs to young people with special educational needs (who have a statement of special educational needs or a Moving On Plan or Post 16 Education, Health and Care Plan). These students may not be able to use public transport and/or may have long and expensive journeys to access a suitable course nearest to their home.

Many schools and colleges offer training to students to help them to travel independently. This training will also help young people to access leisure facilities and provide opportunities for employment.

The County Council also offers limited help to other students, including young adults who meet the eligibility criteria for support from Adult Services.

Students from families in financial hardship, who do not meet the eligibility criteria, or those who are "looked after", should contact the school or college offering the chosen course to apply for help with travel and other costs from the 16-19 Bursary Fund. This fund is administered by the schools and colleges.

Please visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/schooltransport for information and the on-line application form for young people of sixth form age.

2. Details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for students aged 16–19 and who provides them.

Appendix 2 shows details of public transport operators and the travel concessions/products offered.

The County Council also offers the following scheme, for students who live in West Sussex:

- The Sussex Student Card - 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 on-line from Southern Railway. Details are available in Appendix 2 and on the [school transport](#) website.

Special note

The County Council's concessionary bus fare scheme for children and young

people in full-time education (3in1 Card scheme) ceased on 31 December 2016. Bus operators now offer their own discount schemes, details are at www.westsussex.gov.uk/buses

Schools and colleges may offer financial assistance for students, who do not qualify for help under the County Council policy, through the 16-19 Bursary Fund (see section 1 above). Some schools and colleges also offer limited services or have made arrangements for special services to be provided through local bus companies or community transport organisations. Students should enquire direct to the establishments for further details of help that may be available. Contact details are given in Appendix 3.

Some students may be eligible for the Disabled Person's Bus Pass which offers free travel on buses at any time of day. More information and the application are available by visiting www.westsussex.gov.uk/buses .

3. What times during the day can students use their travel pass or obtain concessionary fares?

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

There is no time restriction when using the Sussex Student Card scheme.

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.

See Appendix 2 for details of restrictions on public transport operators' services.

4. Will support continue to be made available to students who reach 19 whilst continuing on a course?

The County Council offers the following help:

Where a student 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 is not eligible for help at the start of the course and family circumstances change, e.g. because you 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 1st September before the beginning of the course.

Help with transport costs may be given to care leavers on an agreed course, at least to the age of 21, subject to assessment by the Young Persons' Service.

Some schools and colleges offer additional help and students should contact the establishment direct for further details.

5. How will students be assessed to see if they are eligible for support? e.g. means testing or must they be on benefits?

Subject to meeting the usual eligibility criteria (distance, nearest establishment etc. as set out in the [policy notes](#)), the County Council offers free transport to students with special educational needs (who have a statement of special educational needs, or a Moving On Plan or a Post 16 Education, Health and Care Plan) 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
- Universal Credit.

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

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. Assessment would be made on a discretionary basis 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.

Where students are eligible for assistance from Adult Services, they may have to make a contribution to the cost of the service following an assessment by a Welfare Benefits Advisor.

6. What help is provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those over 19, or students facing other difficulties in following their courses?

Where deemed necessary for the individual, transport is provided to the nearest school or college for students (16-19) with learning difficulties or disabilities, who are attending a course or comparable course appropriate to their needs, irrespective of distance. Parents are required to pay a charge towards the transport costs, although this charge is waived for families on low income, as specified in (5) above.

If a student is eligible for a Disabled Person's Bus Pass, which offers free travel on bus services, the County Council would expect the student to apply for the pass and to use it to get to and from school or college if able and if there is an available bus service.

Students facing other difficulties may be given assistance by learning

establishments where assessed as necessary. This would include additional support in tutor groups, financial help for, or provision of, specialist equipment, access to counselling, modified examination arrangements etc.

Where not eligible under the County Council's policy as shown in the policy notes, help with transport will be considered for students who are care leavers (including asylum seeking care leavers) or students with disabilities, depending on circumstances, to enable attendance on an agreed course.

West Sussex County Council's Adults Services provides help in some cases for students aged 19+ who are unable to travel independently and who have no other help with funding. This would follow an assessment to ensure that the student is eligible for support from Adult Services. A contribution may be required, the level of which depends on the student's income.

7. Do you provide mobility/independence training for students who face difficulty with transport?

Many schools and colleges include independent travel training for students with special educational needs. Where appropriate, training is provided by schools for students prior to reaching the end of Year 11 in preparation for attending college. Some colleges and special schools work with parents and students, encouraging them to take responsibility and to help with independent travel training. In addition some voluntary groups e.g. parent carer support groups, also offer travel training for young people.

To support this, the County Council arranges training for staff and volunteers in schools, colleges and voluntary groups to enable them to deliver effective independent travel training to young people using the accredited Programme for Independent Travel Training (PITT) although they may adapt this if they consider it more appropriate.

Special schools and colleges continue to work with young people in post 16 settings, where appropriate, using PITT or their own programme.

8. When should students start to apply for transport support?

Students should apply for support from the beginning of June or as soon as they know which course they intend to take.

9. What help can students apply for if they need to travel to a course that is outside West Sussex?

The County Council's usual policy and criteria apply. Help is given to the nearest suitable maintained school or college, whether in-county or beyond the county boundary.

Students with special educational needs who attend out-county schools or colleges, where it is deemed to be the nearest suitable establishment, receive transport where necessary, subject to the annual charge (see section 6 above).

Support will be given to care leavers, where a course is agreed in their Pathway

Plan, as long as the journey is reasonable.

10. What help is available for students who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to stay away?

Individual colleges help students on a discretionary basis. Assistance may also be available where colleges maintain a “host family” accommodation database or other record system.

Students aged 16-19 with special educational needs, supported by the County Council, are normally transported at the beginning and end of each half term plus one return trip home on a weekend during the half term session.

Care leavers are supported by their Social Worker in finding accommodation when attending an agreed course. Transport back to the home base at week-ends and holidays (as appropriate) is also funded.

The national Residential Support Scheme may provide additional assistance to eligible students who need to study away from home for a Level 2 or Level 3 qualification (equivalent to GCSEs and A levels). Further information and an application pack can be obtained by visiting www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme, calling 0800 121 8989 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or emailing RSS@EFAlearnersupport.co.uk.

11. Please provide information about all points of contact for students seeking transport support, e.g., Local Authority/college, bus company contact. Please include any websites and e-mail addresses.

Please see:

Appendix 2 for details of transport operators and concessions offered;

Appendix 3 for school and college contact details and

Appendix 4 for contact details of County Council services offering support.

Students will also find the [Traveline](#) website helpful for planning journeys to and from school and college, or [National Rail Enquiries](#) for those travelling by train.

12. Complaints and appeals

Complaints should be addressed in the first instance to the Pupil Support Office (contact details in Appendix 2). 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).

13. Consultation

This statement will be revised during 2017-18 to produce a statement for the academic year 2018-19. As part of this process, the County Council will consult relevant and interested parties including young people and parents. Consultation will be carried out through schools and other representative groups e.g., West Sussex Parents Forum, but not exclusively.

