

## **West Sussex County Council – Post-16 Transport Policy Assistance with Travel/Transport Costs – 2023-2024**

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 age<sup>1</sup> or a young adult learner<sup>1a</sup> with **Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)**, who will be attending a course appropriate to your needs in September 2023, 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 for those of sixth form age**

Students of sixth form age with **SEND** will be provided with transport assistance (which may require a financial contribution) in the following circumstances:

- 1.** Where the proposed further education course, or comparable course, or a course appropriate to the level of needs<sup>2</sup>, is at the nearest appropriate school/college to the student's home address (regardless of county boundaries) **and**
- 2.** the course is full-time<sup>3</sup> **and**
- 3.** the shortest available walking route<sup>4</sup> from home to school/college is three miles or more **and**
- 4.** the student has lived in the United Kingdom, for reasons other than education, throughout the three years ending 31st August 2022 and has settled status in the United Kingdom **and**

**Where a student of sixth form age meets 1 to 4 (above), parents will need to pay a contribution of £770<sup>7</sup> per year towards the cost of the transport assistance. This can be paid in instalments.**

**No contribution is paid if you have a low family income as defined in 5.**

**No contribution is paid for those who take up a fuel allowance of 30p per mile.**

- 5.** A low family income is defined as:
  - a. the student is eligible for free school meals or

b. the parent/carer (s) <sup>5</sup> is in receipt of one or more of the following<sup>6</sup> (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
- Support received under part six of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400

### Notes

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

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

<sup>1a</sup>A student is a young adult learner if they are aged over 19 and under 25 on 31 August before the start of the course and has an EHCP.

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

<sup>3</sup>A 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.

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

<sup>5</sup> Eligibility will be based on parental income unless the student lives independently.

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

<sup>7</sup>Subject to annual review – £770 refers to the contribution from September 2023. This can be paid over 7 payments by Direct Debit.

### **What transport assistance is provided at sixth form age?**

The County Council expects sixth form age 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/minibus 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) a mileage allowance, where travel by car is agreed. This is 30p per mile. If a parent/carer drives 4 journeys (i.e. 2 return trips) per day all mileage is paid for. No parental contribution (£) is required.
- b) provision or reimbursement of the cost of a rail or bus season ticket (unless eligible for a Disabled Person's Bus Pass);
- c) a place on a contract or school bus;
- d) by taxi/minibus, **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.

Students who are given a bus or coach pass, including for Metrobus and Stagecoach, will be sent a link to upload their photograph.

### **Eligibility for Young Adult Learners**

The council also offers young adult learners with **SEND** limited help with transport. Where young adults with an EHCP meet the qualifying criteria and are eligible for assistance no direct charge is made. To get assistance a student will:

1. meet criteria 1 to 4 (above) for sixth form age students and
2. have an individual assessment of their needs to determine what arrangement the council considers necessary. This will have regard (amongst other things) to the young adult's:
  - a) age and the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which they could reasonably be expected to take
  - b) needs and abilities with regard to travel assistance - travel assistance is only given where the learning disability or difficulty prevents the student from accessing public transport or completing the journey even when accompanied
  - c) family situation and why arrangements cannot be made by them or the student themselves
  - d) the financial resources available to the young adult, including any benefits or care package which may be received or they might be eligible for

## **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)
- 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. Transport assistance to the work element of Supported Internships may be funded through the Access to Work Scheme, available through colleges.

## **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, e.g. because of redundancy, illness or divorce, please email the address at the end of these notes with full details of the situation. Further consideration will then be given to your case.
- Transport is not provided for taster sessions or induction weeks
- 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. Information on the concessions available are listed in the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement on the Council's website.

### **Applying for help from the County Council:**

- **Sixth form age** should apply online on the website [www.westsussex.gov.uk/post-16transport](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/post-16transport)

If you need help in completing the form, the [SEND Information, Advice and Support Service \(SENDIAS\)](#) may be able to help you (helpline number 0330 2228555). A fresh application must be made each school/college year.

- **Young adult Learners** should contact their social worker in the first instance. Those without a social worker should contact the Adult Services Care Point on 01243 642121 or email [socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk)

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 asked to pay the contribution. The contribution will be made if you do not meet the financial criteria (in para 5) or accept the 30p per mile fuel payment. Payments can be made monthly, in two termly instalments or in full.

The fuel payment rate is 25p per mile (currently with a 5p cost of fuel enhancement making a rate of 30p per mile.) In exceptional cases where a child is judged by the council to otherwise need to travel alone due to severe and complex needs an enhanced rate of 40p per mile (currently enhanced to 45p per mile) may be paid. These rates are revised from time to time.

The parental contribution goes 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 eligibility for help with transport...**

Issues or requests for a decision review should be addressed in the first instance to the Pupil and Student Support Office. Most queries are resolved at this stage. If however you are not satisfied with a decision about eligibility for assistance, there is a formal appeal process. A Stage One appeal may be made to the Director of Education and Skills. There is specific appeal paperwork that you will need to fill out which can be sent to you by request. This is in addition to the County Council's corporate complaints procedure.

Every effort will be made to resolve any issues 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](mailto:Post16transport@westsussex.gov.uk)

[www.westsussex.gov.uk](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk)

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