

APPENDIX 1

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

POST 16 TRANSPORT SCHEME AND POLICY STATEMENT

ACADEMIC YEAR 2010 - 11

Legal framework

The requirements placed on a Local Authority are defined in the Education Act 1996, Learning and Skills Act 2000, Education Act 2002 and Education and Skills Act 2008 and more recently The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and learning Act 2009. These Acts require that:

- (1) A Local Education Authority shall prepare for each academic year a Transport Policy Statement.
- (2) The statement shall specify the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the Authority consider it necessary to make for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age receiving education or training:
 - (a) at a sixth form college;
 - (b) a college of further education
 - (c) an establishment funded directly by the YPLA
 - (d) a learning provider funded by the local authority to deliver Foundation Learning or other accredited programme
- (3) This requires the Local Authority to have regard to the need to include sufficient information in their Transport Statement and the need to publish the statement in good time, so that young people and their parents are able to take account of those matters when choosing an establishment.
- (4) The statement shall specify the arrangements that the Authority consider it necessary to make for the provision of financial assistance in respect of the reasonable travelling expenses of persons of sixth form age receiving education or training at any establishment such as is mentioned in subsection (2).

In preparing this Policy Statement, the County Council is mindful of the new requirements under the Education and Skills Act 2008, in which the age of participation in education or training will be mandatory for children and young people until they are 17 from 2013, and from 2015 until their 18th birthday.

THE CURRENT PRINCIPLES OF THE 2010/11 POLICY AND TRANSPORT SCHEME

Whilst there is no legal duty to provide free transport to all post 16 students, the scheme operating under this policy recognises that the County Council needs to support young people from low income families and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The County Council has established a Transport Partnership in which the key stakeholders involved in the provision of education or training for students aged 16 or over, work collaboratively in supporting students and their transport arrangements.

The County Council currently allocates some £720k per annum of funding specifically towards supporting transport provision for post 16 students from low income families and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The principles in which the policy is founded remain broadly the same as in previous years and are set out below:

- This policy applies to all students who meet the Council's eligibility criteria on grounds of low income or who have learning difficulties and or disabilities who are in full time education (12 hours or more per week) attending schools, FE colleges and other establishments supported by LEA.
- Transport will only be provided to the student's nearest or designated school, suitable college or nearest training provider.
- Wherever possible, independent travel will be promoted for all students including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Students with learning difficulties and/or disabled who live within 3 miles of their nearest or designated school, college or nearest training provider will not normally receive support with transport under this policy, unless in exceptional circumstances.
- A scheme offering independent travel training to students with special educational needs will be established, working in conjunction with schools and colleges, to enable more students to travel using public transport, walking and cycling.
- Support for the provision of transport will be provided to students up to the age of 19, or those students who have started a course of education before attaining the age of 19 will continue to receive support up to the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of 19. There will be an exception up to age 25 for a small number of students who are formally assessed with a learning difficulty in accordance with section 139a or 140 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. The decision to continue with support for transport will be made on a case by case basis and determined by the Referral Panel.
- It is recognised that for a small number of young people with complex or multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities, that it may not be possible to access post-16 education through an existing NCC contracted coach, using public transport, standard College-based transport or a mobility scheme. Where the young person is from a low income family then 100% subsidy may apply. Where the low income criterion does not apply, transport for funding will be considered up to the first £200 of the costs, which is consistent with the 50% subsidy for sixth form students. The decision on transport support in these cases will be by exception and will be made by the Referral Panel.

- In most cases support will only be provided for a maximum of 3 consecutive academic years. There will be an exception for a small number of students with a learning difficulty and/or disability who are formally assessed with a learning difficulty under Section 139a or 140 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. The decision to continue with support for transport will be made on a case by case basis and determined by the Referral Panel.
- No post 16 students will receive assistance with transport on statutory distance criteria alone (i.e. where the distance from home to the place of study is more than 3 miles as measured by an acceptable walking route).
- The transport that will be available for entitled students is one return journey home to their main place of study each day during term time only.
- Students using transport services funded as part of this scheme will be expected to make their way to the nearest pick up point up to 2 miles away from the home address or destination, unless the route is not deemed suitable. The definition of a suitable route will be the same as that used in determining suitable routes for statutory school age children. The current criteria used in assessing suitable routes is attached at Appendix 1, however it should be noted that this is under review and may change at some point during the period of this policy.
- All students whose parents or who are themselves receiving certain named benefits will be entitled to receive appropriate support under this scheme providing it is more than 3 miles from their home address to their place of study. The distance between a student's home and place of study will be measured by the shortest available walking route.
- All students eligible for support under this scheme and who live over 3 miles from their place of study will be entitled to apply for a grant for the provision of a bicycle (including a small maintenance allowance) for the primary purpose of travelling to and from their place of study. Students who successfully apply and receive this grant will be deemed to have been provided with satisfactory support for transport for the entire duration of their course. Cycle training will be provided where requested.
- Parents or carers are to be encouraged to provide transport for which a mileage allowance will be payable.
- The Transport Partners to this policy recognise that it is the parents and or students responsibility for ensuring attendance at a school, college or training provider and also the need to develop all students' travelling skills. It is also recognised that in some circumstances assistance may be required.
- The administration of this scheme will be carried out by the schools and colleges which form part of the Transport Partnership. The financial support provided by the Council for students who meet the eligibility criteria set out in this policy will be 50% of the most cost effective transport arrangements. This will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be determined by the Referral Panel in consultation with the Transport Partnership.

- It is acknowledged that the FE Colleges already invest significant resources in post-16 transport alongside the local authority contribution.

HOW THE SCHEME WORKS

To qualify for financial support under this scheme, students must satisfy all of the following criteria:

Low Income

- i. reside within the administrative boundary of Northamptonshire;
- ii. reside more than 3 miles from their nearest suitable educational establishment or training provider; and
- iii. have parents/legal guardian (or who are themselves) in receipt of one of the following benefits:
 - Income support;
 - Income based Jobseekers Allowance;
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
 - Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income as assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190
 - Guaranteed element of state pension credit
 - receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit

Learning Difficulties and/or disabilities

- i.* reside within the administrative boundary of Northamptonshire;
- ii.* have or did have an SEN Statement at age 16 and/or who are formally assessed with a learning difficulty under Section 139a or 140 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000

or

have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or medical conditions based on criteria agreed with the FE Colleges to ensure priority for students with the greatest need to access specialist educational provision

- iii.* reside more than 3 miles from their nearest suitable educational establishment or training provider (this criterion will be waived in exceptional circumstances);
- iv.* attending their nearest suitable school, college or training provider;

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE OFFERED

The scheme operating under this policy is to be administered by the schools and colleges and training providers supported by the local authority. This does not however restrict individual schemes which enhance and complement the objectives of this Transport Policy Statement being introduced by individual schools, colleges or training establishments.

The type of assistance to be given will depend on the individual circumstances of the student and will be assessed by the school, college or training establishment.

The Council will undertake regular reviews of the decisions made by Colleges to award financial support for student transport to ensure compliance with the policy and that decisions are consistent across all education and training establishments.

NCC Contracted Services

Post 16 students attending Northamptonshire Schools to which transport is normally provided can purchase a travel pass to travel on NCC contracted vehicles provided spare capacity is available. Whilst priority will be given to students who fulfil the eligibility criteria set out within this statement (for which the Council will contribute 50% of the cost), the scheme will be open to all students at the following rates:

- Whole Year £400
- Autumn (Term 1&2) £160
- Spring (Term 3&4) £140
- Summer (Term 5&6) £140

The County Council is currently working with Northamptonshire Colleges to allow all college students to use County Council contracted school services, where the service could broadly meet the journey requirements of the student. It is anticipated that a scheme offering spare capacity on County Council contracted services to all post 16 students will be in place sometime during autumn 2010.

Public Transport Services

Where a student satisfies the eligibility criteria and their journey can reasonably be accommodated using existing public transport then financial support will be given to purchase a bus pass. The level of financial support will be 50% of the cost of the bus pass.

The cost of the pass will vary due to the number of different public transport providers operating throughout the county and the individual journey requirement of the student. The County Council, through the Quality Bus Partnership, is working on behalf of Northamptonshire Colleges to secure fair and consistent pricing for student bus passes.

Further schemes to support students with the cost of a bus pass may be available from their local district or borough council. Students are advised to contact their local council prior to applying for support under this scheme. Additionally, the colleges themselves operate subsidised transport schemes and students are advised to contact the Colleges directly to identify what additional support may be available.

Other Transport Provision

Where public transport is not available, then it may be necessary to provide a Taxi to accommodate a students' journey to and from school or College. In such cases, and where the student meets the eligibility criteria for financial support, then the Council will pay 50% towards the cost of transport. The school or College will be expected to use the Council's Framework Agreements in the procurement of transport and ensure that where appropriate, the provision of a Taxi is shared with other eligible students.

Parents or carers of students who are eligible for financial support will be encouraged to provide transport for which a mileage allowance will be paid. Where a student is in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance and has a Motability Vehicle, then this should be used in the first instance to transport the student to and from school or College, for which a mileage allowance will be paid.

Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be assessed by the school, college or training facility and transport will be provided to meet the needs of the student. In these cases, and where the student is from a low income family, then the full costs of transport should be met. Schools, Colleges and educational establishments will be required to submit for approval to the County Council the criteria to be used in undertaking such assessments.

Some colleges already operate an independent travel training programme for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Whilst each programme will differ slightly, the County Council is seeking to offer a comprehensive programme across Northamptonshire working in partnership with education establishments to introduce training during the final 2 years of a student's statutory education. The details of the scheme will be presented to the Transport Partnership later this calendar year.

Out of County Education

Only students who fulfil the criteria under Learning Difficulties and/or disabilities, and whose parents are in receipt of certain named benefits outlined earlier and who attend an out of county school or college because the majority of their subjects cannot be met within the county, will be eligible for support under this scheme where the Council will fund 50% of the transport costs. Students attending an alternative school through personal preference or choice will not receive assistance with transport.

FUNDING

The decision to award transport or financial support to students will be determined by the school, college or training establishment. As stated previously, the County Council will provide funding of £720k for the academic year 2010/11 towards the cost of transport to support students eligible under this policy. The County Council will contribute 50% of the costs of transport for students eligible for financial support under this policy.

FUTURE WORK OF THE TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Bike Scheme

A bike scheme will be introduced towards the end of 2010 to allow those students who qualify for assistance under this policy and who live more than 3 miles from their nearest or suitable educational establishment to be provided with a grant to purchase a bike, with an allowance to cover general maintenance. Students who opt for this will be deemed to have been provided with the necessary transport for the duration of their course. Cycle training will be provided where requested.

It is intended that a similar scheme will be available for non qualifying students, however this will be on at a subsidised cost rather than free of charge, the details of which will be confirmed at the end of this calendar year.

This scheme will be administered by the County Council however the cost will need to be shared across the Transport Partnership. The County Council will match fund up to a maximum of £30,000 for the financial year 2010/11. This is in addition to the £720k already allocated towards the scheme.

Education Transport Innovation Fund

Guidance for the preparation of Transport Policy Statements refers to a case study in Nottinghamshire where partnership members jointly bid for funding through an innovation fund which encourages institutions to work together and provide equitable support for learners. Northamptonshire County Council will seek to introduce a similar scheme within its Transport Partnership, and whilst it will encourage joint funding bids to be made, the scheme will encourage bids for infrastructure and initiatives that promote and encourage less reliance on motorised transport. It is likely that the scheme will not be in place until early 2011 and the details and administration of the scheme will be agreed by the Transport Partnership.

Other Future Proposals

There are a number of areas that have been identified within the partnership where better integrated working and planning can be implemented that would strengthen and improve the support to post 16 students. These are summarised below:

- Better integrated planning of transport. Some schools and colleges commission their own transport for students who would not qualify under this scheme. The County Council is looking to introduce an IT solution that will provide improved route planning and optimisation for all education transport and we will encourage members of the Transport Partnership to be included within this to share any benefits that may arise.
- Strengthen the engagement of the partnership in identifying opportunities where developer funding obtained through the planning system could assist in the delivery of infrastructure that would support transport for post 16 students.
- In preparation for the 2011 Transport Scheme and Policy Statement, and working in conjunction with schools and Colleges, the Council will consult with parents and students in the Autumn Term (Sept-Dec 2010) on the proposed arrangements to support Post 16 transport.

Useful Contacts

National Traveline 0870 608 2608

www.pti.org.uk

Northamptonshire County Council

16+ Travel Scheme – contact Customer Services on 01604 236236

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/learning/parents

Colleges

Northampton College at Booth Lane and Lower Mounts	01604 734066
Northampton College at Daventry	01604 736306
Moulton College	01604 491131
Tresham College, Kettering	01536 410252
Tresham College, Corby	01526 402252
Tresham College, Wellingborough	01933 224165

Bus Companies (the two main ones)

First Northampton 01604 751431

Website: www.firstgroup.com

Stagecoach East 01604 676060/ 0870 608 2608

Website: www.stagecoachbus.com

Moulton College –

Transport department, Moulton College, West Street, Moulton, Northampton NN3 7RR.
01604 491131

Website: www.moulton.ac.uk

Northampton College at Booth Lane, Daventry and Lower Mounts –

The National Travel Line 0870 608 2608

Northampton College Learner Support Services 01604 734066 (Booth Lane), 01604 736306(Daventry)

e-mail: Learnersupport@northamptoncollege.ac.uk

Website: www.northamptoncollege.ac.uk

Tresham Institute –

Transport Co-ordinator, St. Mary's Road, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN15 7BS

Website: www.tresham.ac.uk

APPENDIX 1

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOL TRANSPORT – SAFETY OF WALKING ROUTES

(Built-up areas inc. in villages)

When determining whether the LEA should provide transport to schools on safety grounds, a number of criteria have to be considered in order to determine a route's acceptability for pupils to walk.

The criteria assume that pupils aged 4-11 will be accompanied by a responsible adult, and that pupils aged 11 or over may travel independently. The law expects that all pupils will be accompanied "as appropriate".

Pupils are expected to travel by the shortest available route. However, where that route is judged to be unacceptable longer alternatives may be considered provided that they are still within the agreed walking distance.

The following are the criteria that must all be met for a route to be acceptable for use by child pedestrians in an urban or village environment.

- 1 Can the route be walked without walking on a classified¹ road?
If yes, the route may be acceptable.
If no, the route is unacceptable.
- 2 Is the 85th percentile speed² more than the guidelines for enforcement³?
If yes, the route is unacceptable.
If no, the route may be acceptable.
- 3 Are there formal crossing facilities⁴ available on A class roads as required?
If no, the route is unacceptable.
If yes the route may be acceptable.

In measuring the speed of vehicles to apply criterion 2, only the data collected on schooldays between 0700hrs and 0900hrs and between 1500hrs and 1700hrs will be taken into account. The route will be considered acceptable if the average speed of 85% of traffic over the week during the stated times is below the enforcement guidelines.

If a route appears to meet all of the criteria it will be deemed to be acceptable. Should a decision be challenged, a site visit would be made to verify that no exceptional circumstances exist.

¹ Class A, B or C.

² The speed which 85% of vehicles does not exceed.

³ As determined by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

⁴ School Crossing Patrols, pedestrian refuges, zebra, pelican or other light-controlled crossings.

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
SCHOOL TRANSPORT – SAFETY OF WALKING ROUTES
(VILLAGE TO VILLAGE ROUTES)**

When determining whether the LEA should provide transport to schools on safety grounds, a number of criteria have to be considered in order to determine a route's acceptability for pupils to walk.

The criteria assume that pupils aged 4-11 will be accompanied by a responsible adult, and that pupils aged 11 or over may travel independently. The law expects that all pupils will be accompanied "as appropriate".

Pupils are expected to travel by the shortest available route. However, where that route is judged to be unacceptable longer alternatives may be considered provided that they are still within the agreed walking distance.

The following are the criteria that must all be met for a route to be acceptable for use by child pedestrians.

- 1 Is the route classified as Red or Amber¹ by the Highway Authority?
If yes, the route is unacceptable. If no, the route may be acceptable.
2. Can the route be walked without walking on a classified² road?
If yes, the route may be acceptable. If no, the route is unacceptable.
3. Is the traffic flow over 1,000 vehicles in the peak hour?
If yes, the route is unacceptable. If no, the route may be acceptable.
- 4 Is the 85th percentile speed³ more than the guidelines for enforcement⁴?
If yes, the route is unacceptable. If no, the route may be acceptable.
- 5 Are there formal crossing facilities⁵ available on A class roads as required?
If no, the route is unacceptable. If yes the route may be acceptable.

In measuring the speed of vehicles to apply criterion 4, only the data collected on schooldays between 0700hrs and 0900hrs and between 1500hrs and 1700hrs will be taken into account. The route will be considered acceptable if the average speed of 85% of traffic over the week during the stated times is below the enforcement guidelines.

If a route appears to meet all of the criteria it will be deemed to be acceptable. Should a decision be challenged, a site visit would be made to verify that no exceptional circumstances exist.

¹ Under the Casualty Reduction Strategy, all roads in the county are classified Red, Amber or Green on the basis of their overall accident record.

² Class A, B or C.

³ The speed which 85% of vehicles do not exceed.

⁴ As determined by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

⁵ School Crossing Patrols, pedestrian refuges, zebra, pelican or other light-controlled crossings.