

Northamptonshire County Council

Post 16 Education Travel Scheme

September 2019

Northamptonshire County Council

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

This includes students of sixth form age and young adult learners, subject to an Education, Health and Care plan

Academic Year 2019 – 2020

1. Legal and policy framework

1.1. The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2012. These Acts require that:

- (1) A local 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 at:
 - (a) A school
 - (b) A college of further education
 - (c) An authority maintained or assisted institution providing further education
 - (d) An establishment supported by the Education Funding Agency
 - (e) A learning provider funded by the authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to a positive outcome.
- (3) This requires the 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 these 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).
- (5) The Statement shall also provide information about the travel provision put in place for young adult learners aged 19 – 25 in respect of whom the authority have carried out a learning difficulty assessment (LDA) or have issued an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

1.2 The Department for Education 2014 Post-16 transport to education and training (February 2014) advises that local authorities should not differentiate

between providers or institutions in the arrangements it provides to support students in facilitating their attendance in education or training. In preparing this Policy Statement, Northamptonshire County Council ('the Authority') is mindful of the new requirements under the Education and Skills Act 2008, which are as follows:

Raising the Participation Age

From 2015 all young people are required to continue in learning or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18.

Raising the participation age (RPA) does not mean that young people must stay in school; they will be able to choose one of the following choices:

- Full-time education, such as school, FE college or home education
- Apprenticeships, work-based learning
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for at least 20 hours a week

2. Scope

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

2.2 The Authority 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.

Please note: There is now an online form to apply for Post 16 Travel arrangements through Northamptonshire County Council. Please ensure that you read the instructions in this policy carefully before applying.

If you believe that the applicant may be entitled to travel arrangements and is attending Northampton College or Moulton College please apply directly to the college.

If you believe that the applicant may be entitled to travel arrangements and is attending Tresham College please apply directly to the college for mainstream courses and online through the NCC website if the applicant has an EHC Plan or has a disability.

The Principles of the 2019 – 2020 Policy and Transport Scheme

Students of sixth-form age

This is defined as being a person receiving education or training at an establishment and he/she is over compulsory school age but is under the age of 19 or has begun a particular course at the establishment before attaining the age of 19 and continues to attend that course.

3.1 The principles in which the policy is founded remain broadly the same as in previous years and are set out below, but now include the requirement for entitled students to make a contribution towards their transport costs:

- The arrangements under this policy are that all students who are entitled to support contribute £600 per annum towards the costs of their transport. Where a student qualifies under grounds of low income then the contribution by the student will be 50% (£300 per annum). This charging structure will apply to all students whether attending NCC mainstream or special/specialist post-16 education provision, independent schools or FE colleges and other suitable training establishments.
- Where a student qualifies on grounds of low income and who also has a learning difficulty or disability, which necessitates transport assistance, then transport will be provided free of charge.
- In cases where there are 2 or more siblings within a household who are both in Post-16 education and who are entitled to support under this policy, then consideration will be given for a discount for each additional sibling or, in some cases, the additional sibling could receive free transport. Each case will be considered on its own merits.
- The Authority will, in the first instance, explore whether a parent or carer will provide transport and be remunerated for their fuel costs, if the student is eligible. The Authority will also take receipt of 16 – 19 bursary funding into account in assessing an individual's need for financial help with transport. Where a person receives a benefit to facilitate their mobility needs (e.g. Disability Living Allowance, where this includes the higher rate mobility element) the Authority may explore whether this can be used to support their transport needs to and from education or training for which a mileage rate will be paid. Each case will be considered on its own merits.
- Support for the provision of transport will be considered for students of sixth form age i.e. a student who is over compulsory school age, but below 19, or in exceptional circumstances a student who has begun a particular course of education or training before they reached 19 and continues to attend that course. Please note that where the student becomes 19 years of age during their course, transport assistance will cease at the end of the academic year in which the 19th birthday falls.

- Students of sixth form age must be enrolled on a full-time education course, scheduled to provide at least 540 hours of guided learning annually. Exceptional circumstances may arise, where a student has, for example, had to take a break in learning due to medical needs and is unable to meet the minimum number of study hours.
- The Authority does not provide support for transport assistance for part-time courses; higher education; or non-state funded education, unless agreed and arranged by the Authority.
- Where a school/college or parent have been making their own transport arrangements, the Authority will not agree to pay these costs retrospectively.

Eligibility criteria for support

- Students may be entitled to receive appropriate support providing the distance between their home address and place of study is more than 3 miles. The distance between a student's home and place of study will be measured by the shortest available walking route (see Appendix 1 'Safety of Walking Routes').
- Students who live within 3 miles of their nearest or designated school, college or nearest training provider will not normally receive support with transport unless there are exceptional circumstances which mean the student is unable to travel independently or with assistance from a parent, guardian or carer. Consideration will be given by the Authority to the nature of a student's learning difficulty and/or disability on a case by case basis. Wherever possible, independent travel will be promoted for all students including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Support for transport will normally only be provided to the student's nearest or designated school, suitable college or training provider. Consideration may be given to a setting outside of the Authority's border and also where a student or their parent, guardian or carer expresses a wish for an alternative school, FE college or training provider on the grounds of religion or belief.
- The transport that will be available for eligible students is one return journey home to their main place of study at the beginning and end of 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 1 mile away from the home address or destination, unless the route is not deemed suitable or cannot reasonably be undertaken due to a student's learning difficulty and/or disability. The definition of a suitable route will be the same as that used in determining suitable routes of children of statutory school age.
- All students eligible to support under this scheme and who live over 3 miles from their place of study can 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.

- The Authority will administer the scheme in conjunction with schools, FE colleges and training providers and will ensure that the scheme does not differentiate between institutions and providers.
- A scheme offering independent travel training to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be explored, working in conjunction with parents, students, schools, FE colleges and training providers.
- Parents, guardians or carers of eligible students will be encouraged to provide transport for which a mileage allowance will be payable.
- The partners of this policy recognise that it is the parents' and/or student's responsibility for ensuring attendance at a school, FE college or training provider.
- If a student plans to attend/is attending one of the FE colleges in the county, the student must make a transport application directly to the FE College.
- An exception is made for those students with an EHCP who are attending Tresham College and all students attending FE Colleges which are outside of Northamptonshire's administrative boundary. These students must apply to Transport Services within Northamptonshire Highways by using the application form on the Northamptonshire County Council website.
- It is acknowledged that the FE colleges already invest significant resources in providing post-16 transport support alongside the Authority's contribution.

3. How the charging scheme works for students of sixth form age

4.1 Reductions in the charging scheme for students who are eligible for transport support are determined as follows:

Low income

Student must:

- 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:
 - Universal Credit
 - 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.

Students with Learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Student must:

- i. reside within the administrative boundary of Northamptonshire;
- ii. have an Education, Health and Care plan.
- iii. reside more than 3 miles from their nearest suitable educational establishment or training provider or for students living under this distance, the need for transport support will be assessed according to the student's learning needs and/or disabilities.
- iv. be attending their nearest suitable school, FE college or training provider.

4.2 The arrangements in accordance with this policy are that all students of sixth-form age who are eligible for support contribute £600 per annum towards their transport costs. Where a student qualifies on the grounds of low income then the contribution by the student will be 50% (£300 per annum). Where this applies and the student also has an Education and Health Care Plan, which necessitates transport assistance, then this will be provided free of charge.

4.3 In cases where there are 2 or more siblings within a household who are both in Post-16 education and who are entitled to support under this policy, then consideration will be given for a further discount for each additional sibling or, in some cases, the additional sibling may receive free transport. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

4.4 This charging structure will apply to all students whether attending NCC mainstream or special educational post-16 provision, independent schools or FE colleges and other suitable training providers. Details of flexible payment plans are on the application form.

5. Type of support/mode of travel offered for students

5.1 The scheme operating in accordance with this policy is specifically for students who meet the Authority's eligibility criteria. This does not however restrict individual schemes, which enhance and complement the scope of this policy statement, being introduced by individual schools, colleges or training establishments.

5.2 The type of support/mode of travel will depend on the individual circumstances of the student, which will be assessed by the Authority, school, FE college or training provider.

5.3 The Authority will undertake regular reviews of the decisions made by FE 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.

5.4 The Authority is currently working with Northamptonshire FE colleges to allow all FE college students to use County Council contracted school services, where the service could broadly meet the journey requirements of the student.

Public Bus and Rail Services

5.2 Where a student is entitled to support and their journey can reasonably be accommodated using existing public bus or rail, then the student will be expected to pay up to the first £600 in accordance with the outcome of their low income assessment, learning difficulties and/or disabilities entitlement.

5.3 The cost of the pass will also vary due to the number of different public transport providers operating throughout the county and the individual journey requirement of the student. The Authority is working to secure fair and consistent pricing for student bus passes.

5.4 There may be other schemes available through the local or district borough councils to support students with their transport costs. Students are advised to contact their local council prior to applying for support under this scheme. Additionally, the FE colleges themselves operate subsidised transport schemes and students are advised to contact the FE colleges directly to identify what additional support may be available.

Other Transport Provision

5.5 Where public transport is not available, or the student is unable to use public transport due to a learning difficulty or disability, then it may be necessary to provide a taxi to accommodate a student's journey to and from school or college. In such cases the student will be expected to pay up to the first £600 in accordance with the outcome of their low income assessment, learning difficulties and/or disabilities entitlement.

5.9 Where a school or FE college arranges the transport for students, they will be expected to use the Authority's Framework Agreements in the procurement of transport and ensure that where appropriate, the provision of a taxi is shared with other entitled students.

5.10 Parents or carers of students who are entitled for support under this policy 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 then this may be used to transport the student to and from school or FE College.

Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

- 5.11 Students with an EHC plan, will be assessed on their transport entitlement by the Authority or by the FE College. Other students who do not have an EHC plan will be considered by the school, FE college or training provider in agreement with the Authority. Decisions/recommendations will be made in accordance with the legal framework and statutory guidance for post-16 transport provision. Suitable travel arrangements will then be provided to address the needs of entitled students.
- 5.12 Some FE colleges already operate an independent travel training programme for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Whilst each programme will differ slightly, the Authority would wish to develop 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 prior to commencing their further education.

Out of County Education

- 5.13 This policy applies where the educational needs of a student with learning difficulties and/or disabilities cannot be addressed within Northamptonshire and a suitable out of county establishment is identified by the Authority.
- 5.14 Students attending an alternative school through personal preference or choice will not receive assistance with transport.
- 5.15 Attendance at out of county education establishments may include weekly or termly boarding and hence the transport arrangements for each student will vary accordingly. In such cases, the scheduling of transport will be agreed with the school, FE college or training provider, in conjunction with the parents/carers or young person and within the terms of the EHCP.
4. Applying for post-16 travel support

To apply for transport to a school, or Tresham College, on line application forms are now available on the Northamptonshire County Council website. If you are applying for transport to Northampton College or Moulton College, you will need to apply to the college direct. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s)/ carer(s) and student to obtain an application form and apply for transport support.

To be guaranteed transport, subject to the qualifying criteria, on NCC vehicles the closing date for post 16 applications is the last working day in May before the start of the new academic year.

After this date transport will be provided subject to available capacity.

Any applications received after Friday 9th August are considered late and may not be processed in time for the start for the new term.

Completed applications received before the last working day in May will guarantee transport support for the whole of the next academic year, subject to eligibility.

Completed applications received after the last working day in May will not guarantee transport support for the whole of the next academic year and will be agreed on a half term basis (6 weeks), subject to availability.

Any additional late applications received after Friday 23rd August will not be assessed until October half term. Please ensure that you have alternative transport arrangements in place during this time. Northamptonshire County Council will not be responsible for any travel costs incurred during this time.

The Authority does not offer reimbursements for travel costs where the application or renewal has not been submitted in accordance with these timescales.

FE Colleges or training providers may have their own arrangements and contact should be made with them initially to discuss this if you are applying after the deadlines above.

12. **Young adult learners, aged 19 – 25 subject to an Education, Health and Care plan**

Please note that this policy does not relate to young adults who are not in education or training and who do not have an Education, Health and Care plan. Information about transport provision for other young adults can be obtained from the Authority's Adult Social Care Transport policy.

- Whilst the Authority would continue to encourage the participation in education and training by persons who are over compulsory school age but under 19 and persons aged 19 – 25 with an EHC plan, young adult learners would be expected to meet the cost of travel between home and the provider at which they are receiving education or training except in the circumstances as follows:

Free transport would be provided to a young adult learner (not being a person of sixth form age), where the Authority has secured the provision of education or training and the provision of boarding accommodation for an adult learner aged under 25 and subject to an EHC plan and where it is considered necessary to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

Free transport assistance may be provided where an adult learner was receiving education or training at an establishment maintained or assisted by the Authority and providing Further Education, or at a College of Further Education, and the Authority considered that:

- (a) the person's attendance on that course was reasonably necessary; and
- (b) it was necessary for the Authority to provide transport to facilitate that person's attendance on the course.

In deciding whether it is necessary for the Authority to provide free transport assistance for an adult learner, the Authority would amongst other things, have regard to:

- the learner's age, ability and aptitude
- any learning difficulties the person may have
- the locations and times at which the education or training is provided
- the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which the learner could reasonably be expected to take.

For the purposes of deciding whether to provide free transport the Authority would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

Appeal procedures

Parents/guardians/carers or a young person are entitled to challenge the decision of the Authority to refuse to provide assistance with transport as set out in this policy or

when the parents/guardians/carers or young person consider that the travel arrangements, agreed by the Authority, are unsuitable.

A decision may be challenged on the following grounds:

- eligibility
- distance measurement; and/or
- safety of the route
- transport arrangements offered

Please note that there is no right to challenge a decision made by the Authority, where a child's/young person's entitlement to transport assistance has been removed either temporarily or permanently on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour.

Full details of the appeal procedures for home to school transport are available on the Council's website (www.northamptonshire.gov.uk).

Work of the Transport Partnership

Northamptonshire's Post-16 Transport Partnership brings together key partners in the county who work collaboratively on the Post 16 Transport Policy statement and to develop innovative and appropriate travel solutions to enable access to further education and training courses for this age group.

We intend to deliver an Independent Travel Education Programme aimed at improving travel independence for Post 16 students (often with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) to enable access to college and special school by travelling on public transport independently.

Northamptonshire County Council and Stagecoach Midlands are collaborating to encourage eligible students to make use of the National Concessionary Fare Scheme which is a free public bus pass for students with a disability. The bus pass and supporting morning only Termrider pass will enable suitable college students to travel independently to college and socially. Please contact the Transport Services Team for more details.

College Information

Below is a brief summary from each of the Northamptonshire Colleges:

Northampton College

Northampton College offer subsidised bus passes where a student is eligible as per the NCC criteria (under 19, more than 3 miles from site of study, on a full-time course)

Students can apply to the bursary for transport support where there is a household income below £26,000 or income based benefits

Northampton College sell stagecoach bus passes for use on public bus services. Bus number 16 travels every 10 minutes between Northampton bus station and Northampton College.

Contact phone number for all 3 sites: 01604 734258
Email: student.services@northamptoncollege.ac.uk

Moulton College

Moulton College operates a comprehensive subsidised transport network throughout Northamptonshire, allowing students access to the main college and all of its outcentres.

Please telephone 01604 491131 for further information or see our website at:

<http://www.moulton.ac.uk/the-college/life-at-moulton/getting-to-moulton>

Tresham College

Mainstream students should apply directly to the college when making their college application.

Students with an EHCP should apply for Post 16 Transport arrangements through Northamptonshire County Council details below. The application form can be obtained on the NCC website or by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/EducationandLearning/Parents/travel/Pages/HtoS.aspx>

Tresham College may offer additional support to learners through their Learner Support Fund subject to meeting the eligibility criteria

Tresham College: 0845 6588990 – select campus required

Email: info@tresham.ac.uk

Public Transport Information

National Traveline 0870 608 2608

Website: www.pti.org.uk

Stagecoach East 01604 676060/ 0870 608 2608

Website: www.stagecoachbus.com

Centre Bus 0844 351 1120

Website: www.centrebus.co.uk

Northamptonshire County Council

16+ Travel Scheme – contact Customer Services on 0300 126 1000
www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/learning/parents