

Discretionary travel for post-16 students – Terms and Conditions

Suffolk County Council and its partner organisations (the local Learning and Skills Council, Connexions, schools, colleges and others including the 14-19 Transport Partnership) have developed a policy for home-to-school and college transport assistance for students, 16-19 years old. The discretionary policy meets the requirements of part 6 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 and the guidance provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) on the duties and responsibilities set out in the legislation.

Please read the following notes

1. The transport you are applying for is discretionary and if you qualify for an offer of transport assistance under the terms that follow you will be asked to pay a fixed termly contribution towards the cost of the pass (the balance of the cost being met by the County Council and its partners). An invoice will be sent to you which, when returned with your payment, will permit the issue of the termly pass which will be posted to your home address.
2. Discretionary travel assistance is only available to Suffolk resident students whose homes are more than 3 miles from their chosen school/sixth form centre/college measured by the nearest available walking route. The term “school” refers to a school maintained by a local education authority or a foundation school funded from public resources. The policy of travel assistance for Post-16 students does not extend to independent schools. The term “college” refers to colleges of further education.
3. Discretionary travel assistance will be offered to students undertaking an approved full-time course at a school, sixth form centre or college of further education, subject to the home-to-school/sixth form centre/college journey time not exceeding 75 minutes, assessed by calculating the door-to-door journey time from your home address to the school/college/sixth form centre, using the nearest public transport service. This assessment would take into account any walking/car journey time to the nearest public transport pick up point, time gaps in public transport connections, walking time from set down point to the school/sixth form centre/college, etc.
4. In order to qualify for discretionary travel assistance, students must be aged under 19 at the start of the academic year and pursuing approved courses of full-time education. For students with special needs – please see note 16.
5. Students attending Colleges of Further Education who are pursuing courses such as HNDs, Diplomas of Higher Education or degrees are not entitled to receive discretionary travel. Any pass required must be purchased directly from the travel company concerned.
6. It is a requirement that ALL students who qualify for discretionary travel assistance must meet the discretionary charge regardless of individual circumstances.
7. The offer of transport assistance may involve the provision only of a “main road” type of service that operates to and from defined central points. This provision is usually made on existing contracted or public transport services and students may need to accept a responsibility for the arrangement and

cost of any additional travel needs – either at the “home” end of the journey or in the area of the school/college being attended. Where deemed necessary, the County Council reserves the right under exceptional circumstances to make additional transport provision, including the contracting of new or additional services.

8. The route or mode of travel offered under the discretionary travel scheme will be as designated by the Council according to current transport contract arrangements. Regrettably this normally means that students may not nominate a preferred route. Students allocated to a First Eastern Counties or Ipswich Buses local bus service may, subject to availability and local arrangements, travel to school/college on any of the Company’s services on the line of route up to 1230 and home again at any time between 1230 and 1830. Students allocated to other routes may only travel at times appropriate to the establishment’s official starting and finishing time and as shown in the County Council’s timetable for the journey. A suitable Post-16 student travel service is defined as one that will enable a student to arrive at school/college and depart again at times to coincide with the standard school/college day. This means that variations in the student’s timetable from the standard day will not be accepted as justification to make an alternative provision.
9. Discretionary Post 16 passes are all "return" passes - in other words, "morning only" or "afternoon only" passes are not available. Likewise, pro-rata reductions are not permitted.
10. Students who pay for transport for the first term will automatically receive an invoice during the second half of that term to ascertain whether or not they wish to pay to use the transport the following term.
11. A travel pass will only be valid for the term for which it is issued and the expiry date of that pass will always be at the end of the term. A 50% refund is available in respect of any pass returned by the mid point of the term (i.e. schools half term holiday). No refund will be made for a pass returned in the second half of the term. Returned passes should be forwarded to the address shown below. Whilst every effort will be made to operate the transport as required, no refund or allowance will be made in respect of any day or days on which the transport does not operate or on which a student does not board the transport.
12. No refund of public transport, or other fares incurred whilst awaiting a pass, will be made in cases where the pass has not been issued because the student has failed to submit an application 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the course. Students who do not give the 4 weeks notice requested cannot be guaranteed a pass by the first day of term (or the first day travel is required).
13. Where a student, for any reason, ceases to attend the school/sixth form centre/college during a term or transfers to a course which is different to that stated on the original application form, the travel pass or season ticket must be returned to Passenger Transport immediately and a new application should be made.
14. If the course is indicated as being of more than one year's duration, the offers of transport will continue to be sent as appropriate for the length of the course, providing each term’s payment has been made. If you have left college or transferred to a different course the invoice should be returned without payment with a note of explanation.

15. Smoking is strictly forbidden on all home-to-school/sixth form centre/college transport services. Behaviour that causes damage to the vehicle or offence, inconvenience or danger to the driver or other users of the transport may lead to withdrawal of the travel facility, at the Council's discretion.
16. For students at Special Schools and for other students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, transport may be provided irrespective of the minimum distance and other criteria set in these notes, where it is accepted by the County Council that transport is necessary to enable access to the education they require. Students in this category are required to complete this application form and enclose supporting documents for verification of their Post 16 needs (e.g. letter from Connexions/Social Care/School/family doctor, etc. or copy of earlier Statement of Special Educational Needs). Whilst these notes are targeted for students who are 16-19 years, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities may find transport assistance can be provided if they begin a course after they reach the age of 19 years and in such cases, assistance through the arrangements agreed by the County Council and its partners would continue until the student is 21 years of age.
17. All students must supply a recent passport-sized photograph – your image will be encapsulated in your travel pass. A separate application and letter will be sent with your invoice with further instructions. Please note that some travel companies may require you to hold a separate photocard specific to their company – you will be notified of any requirement to supply an additional photograph later on.
18. The County Council's Post-16 Discretionary Travel Policy is applied consistently however, if a student falls outside of the terms of this policy and the parents/carers believe that their circumstances justify special consideration, they may be entitled to make representation to the Education Transport Appeals Committee. The members of this committee take final decisions in those areas where the county council has discretion to provide home-to-school and college transport. For further information see contact details below.

19. Our contact details are:

Telephone: 08456 606 6173

Email: education.transport@suffolk.gov.uk

Or write to:

Passenger Transport
Economy, Skills and Environment
Suffolk County Council
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road,
Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2BX