

**This policy applies to students in 2011-12 who are already part way through a course in September 2011. Please note that the EMA scheme has now closed to new applicants. The policy is subject to amendment pending confirmation regarding the future**

## **West Sussex County Council – Post 16 Further Education**

### **Assistance with Travel/Transport Costs - 2011/2012**

Students who started a course in 2010/11 or before

To be considered for assistance with travel/transport costs, to attend a full time course of further education between the ages of 16 and 19, from West Sussex County Council, your normal home should be in West Sussex at the time of application. The amount of financial help you receive and the way in which it is provided will vary depending on your circumstances and is subject to the West Sussex County Council's policy guidelines as detailed in this information sheet. Please note that students must apply for assistance each academic year.

### **Eligibility**

For entrants to full time courses which began in the 2010/2011 academic year or before, assistance is normally available in the following circumstances:

- 1 Where the proposed course is at the nearest maintained school/college to the student's home address and
- 2 the course is full-time of at least one year's duration and
- 3 the shortest available walking route 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 2011 and has settled status in the United Kingdom and
- 5 either

The family is in receipt of one or more of the following (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 with an annual Inland Revenue assessed income below £16,190
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

or

The student has learning difficulties or a disability (evidence will be required, see notes) and is attending a special needs course of study.

### **Travel Bursaries**

Where a student meets the criteria in **1)** to **4)** above but the family is not in receipt of one of the items listed at **5)** they may qualify for a contribution to travel costs as follows: -

- where the essential travel and most economical costs exceed £400 (2011/12 year rate) and the student was eligible for the maximum Education Maintenance Allowance per week in the 2010-11 academic year. Evidence of eligibility for the EMA must be provided;

or

- where the essential travel and most economical costs exceed £550 (2011/12 year rate), irrespective of family income.

Where help with travel is agreed, it will be by one or more of the following, as appropriate:

- a)** a free place on a contract or school bus
- b)** provision or reimbursement of the cost of a rail or bus season ticket
- c)** a mileage allowance, where travel by car is agreed
- d)** by taxi, in exceptional cases only, usually for students with severe disabilities
- e)** a contribution towards the cost of travel

The following general notes for guidance should also be read before completing and returning the application form to the address overleaf.

### **If you attend a school with a sixth form**

If you are currently entitled to free school transport because it is your nearest or catchment school, or because you attend a church school on agreed denominational grounds, you will continue to receive help to this school when you move into the sixth form, as long as you meet the usual eligibility criteria above.

### **If your school does not have a sixth form**

As long as you meet the usual eligibility criteria above, you will receive help to the nearest school or college offering your preferred course or one that is comparable. A comparable course is one that, upon completion, will enable you to pursue your career path. (If you wish to check the course you intend to take, please contact the Pupil and Student Support Team.)

Travel to a school which is not the catchment or nearest school/college

**If you attend a maintained school which is not the catchment school, or the nearest school/college to your home, all transport costs are normally your own or your parent's responsibility. However, you may be offered assistance if:**

the course required, or comparable course at an appropriate level, is not available at the catchment or nearest school (or the nearest appropriate church aided school for a pupil already in attendance up to age 16) and the course is **essential** (evidence may be required) for further or higher education or the career you wish to follow.

### Provision and payment

If you are eligible for support you will be sent a letter explaining how your support will be provided. 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.

If you arrange your own transport, you will be expected to travel by the most economical route, using all available discounts and season tickets. Some of the most commonly used are shown overleaf:-

- ½ fares on buses using the 3-in-1 concessionary fare card (all bursary refunds will be calculated on the assumption that this card has been used)
- discount on rail season ticket for West Sussex students (subject to confirmation that the scheme will continue in September 2011).
- "Unizone" rail tickets for use on the South Coast line.
- Megarider Gold tickets or Student Card season tickets from bus operators.
- Concessionary seats available on contract bus routes (£291 per year).

**If you are likely to be travelling by Stagecoach Bus (with a season ticket ordered by the County Council) or a school contract bus, please send a passport style photograph with your application in the enclosed envelope.**

**If you are offered a travel bursary to meet your essential travel costs of more than £550 for the academic year, you will need to meet the first £550 of the year's travel costs. This is normally deducted from the termly claim at the rate of £200, £200 and £150 respectively. In the same way if you are offered a travel bursary to meet your essential travel costs of more than £400 where you are eligible for an EMA at £30 per week, you will need to meet the first £400 of the year's travel cost. This is normally deducted from the termly claim at the rate of £140, £140 and £120, respectively.**

Travel expenses are reimbursed on the basis of the most economical rate.

## General information

Assistance with travel to Programme Led Apprenticeships or E2E programmes is not considered under this scheme.

Travel assistance is not normally provided for retakes or repeat periods of study. It does not cover the cost of journeys to placements of any kind; you are expected to meet these costs yourself.

If your family income seems too high for you to qualify for support at the beginning of the year but your family circumstances change, i.e. because of redundancy, illness or divorce, please write to the address at the end of these notes with full details of the situation. Further consideration will then be given to your case.

You may have already started travelling to school sixth form or college. If so, it is essential that you keep safe any receipts for tickets already bought if you wish to claim reimbursement of costs incurred. Reimbursement will normally be backdated only to the beginning of the term in which the application was received.

## If you are not happy with the decision about your entitlement to help with transport

Complaints should be addressed in the first instance to the Pupil and Student Support Office. If still not satisfied an appeal may be made to the Director of Learning, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1RF. 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.

**Contact details:**  
**Pupil and Student Support**  
**01243 752835/8**  
**fsm@westsussex.gov.uk**  
**www.westsussex.gov.uk**

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