

**This policy applies to students in 2011-12 who are starting a new course in September 2011. Please note that the government's national EMA scheme has now closed to new applicants.**

## **West Sussex County Council – Post 16 Transport Policy**

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

Students starting a new course, or starting in Year 12, in 2011/12

If you are a student of sixth form age with special educational needs, who is starting a new course appropriate to your needs (or starting in Year 12) in September 2011, you may be entitled to West Sussex County Council help with transport to school, sixth form college or college of further education. Normally this will mean that you will have either a statement of special educational needs or a section 139a assessment of needs.

With effect from September 2011, the County Council will not normally help students who do not have special educational needs.

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria below, you may wish to apply for help through your establishment's 16-19 Bursary Fund. More details about this are available from your school or college.

### **Eligibility**

Students with special educational needs will be provided with free transport in the following circumstances:

- 1** Where the proposed further education course, or a course appropriate to the level of needs, 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, or the transport needs are specifically detailed in the learning disability statement **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** The student has learning difficulties or a disability (evidence will be required, see notes) and is attending a course appropriate to the student's needs **and**
- 6** 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.

**Where a student meets 1 to 5 of the above criteria but not 6, parents will be charged £360<sup>1</sup> per year towards the cost of the transport.**

The County Council expects 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.

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 free place on a contract or school bus
- 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 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

## Provision of transport and charges

If you are eligible for support you will be sent a letter explaining how your support will be provided and whether you will be charged £360, as explained above. 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 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.**

## General information

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

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to review

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

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. Some of the most commonly used are shown below: -

- ½ fares on buses using the 3-in-1 concessionary fare card
- 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.

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**