

Local Authority Transport Policy Statement May 2016/17

Kirklees Council

Transport Policy statement for learners aged 16 – 18 in further education, continuing learners aged 19 and young people aged 16 – 24 with special educational needs and/or disabilities

The Partnership's main objectives are to support the participation of students in post 16 full time education and the inclusion of all students by making safe and effective arrangements for travel to school, college and learning providers.

The Partnership is responsible for the Policy relating to the provision of transport for learners who are over 16 but less than 19 years and for students over the age of 16 with special educational needs and/or disabilities who could be eligible for support up to the age of 25.

The Partnership consists of the following:

- Kirklees Local Authority, Special Educational Needs Assessment and Commissioning Team
- Kirklees College
- Huddersfield New College
- Kirklees sixth form schools including special schools
- Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Service
- Students and families

The central principle of this policy is that no learner should be prevented from taking part in full-time education (not less than 12 guided learning hours per week – 450 within the academic year or 14 guided learning hours per week for SEN learners - 540 within the academic year) because of a lack of support in travelling to and from school or college. All children and young people in further education (FE) and learning and those with a Statement of special educational needs (SEN), an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a learning difficulty and/or disability assessment (LLDD) should lead lives that are as independent and free from restriction as possible and that each child and young person is supported to achieve independent travel wherever practicable.

1) Raising the Participation Age

Young people are now required to stay in education or training until their 18 birthday.

Young people do not have to stay at school but they do have to stay in learning and this can include:

- Full time learning such as school or college
- Work based learning including apprenticeships
- Part time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours per week

2) Who qualifies for support?

2.1 As a general rule, students will be aged between 16 and 19 years at the start of the academic year (i.e. 1 September 2016), but eligible students who become 19 part way through a course will continue to receive help until the course being attend is concluded.

2.2 Students must be resident in the administrative area of Kirklees Metropolitan Council.

2.3 Students must be enrolled on and attending a full time course at:

- A school or academy
- An FE institution
- An establishment funded by the EFA (eg Specialist Independent College)
- Learning provider funded by the Local Authority delivering accredited programmes (this could include colleges and private learning providers)

2.4 Please note that programmes of study must meet the EFA definition of full time (450/540 guided learning hours within the academic year) and this will be confirmed by the school/college.

2.5 Students must be attending their nearest school or college to their home address which offers an appropriate course of study in order to qualify for assistance.

2.6 All students will be expected to attend courses within Kirklees district. Only when it is clear that such provision cannot be provided will consideration be given for students to receive help with travel to attend an alternative college, or colleges out of the district. Specific details of the course and reasons for choice will need to be given in order that an assessment can be made having due regard to the efficient and effective use of resources

2.7 Where a suitable course is available in the Kirklees district, but parents/learner wish to attend a college outside the district it will be on the clear understanding they will be fully responsible for all travel and related costs.

2.8 Learners who are in receipt of assisted transport and subsequently fail to attend school or college, without a valid reason, may have their transport support temporarily suspended or withdrawn. Similarly, transport assistance could be withdrawn in the case of persistent bad or disruptive behaviour during journeys.

2.9 Where a learner shares equal time between different parental addresses eligibility will be assessed from the property nearest to the school or college attended.

2.10 Students will be eligible for support for a maximum of 3 years up to and including the age of 19. Students who attain the age of 19 whilst on a course will continue to receive support until the course has concluded.

It is important to note that the duty to provide free assistance with transport to education establishments ends at the age of 16. Responsibility for making appropriate transport arrangements rests with the student and/or parent/carers.

3) Guidance for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities or facing other difficulties in following their course

3.1 Students aged between 19 and 24 at the start of a course with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other special circumstances may be considered for help towards transport. Such applications will be considered in accordance with their individual circumstances and subject to finance being available.

3.2 Students previously in receipt of bespoke transport provision while at school will have their transport arrangements reviewed on transferring to further education/learning. Requests for transport for students with special needs will need to be supported as in 3.12 below.

3.3 Where students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities qualify for transport assistance will be provided in a way that promotes independence for the student.

3.4 Students [16-25] who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities may qualify for transport to and from school/college but only if they are unable to make the journey in any other way.

3.5 Students must be able to prove need and must demonstrate that in the absence of an award/assistance they would experience difficulties in accessing or completing their education/training because of financial and/or other barriers.

3.6 Transport provision will be reviewed as appropriate on a regular basis in order where possible to move towards a greater degree of independence for the young person.

3.7 We expect young people to reach their establishment of education and training without incurring such stress, strain or difficulty that they would be prevented from benefitting from the education provided. Best practice suggests a child of secondary school age may reasonable be expected to travel 75 minutes each way to access learning. It is reasonable to apply similar expectations to learners of sixth form age.

3.8 Where the learner has a learning difficulty and/or disability this may necessitate a shorter maximum journey time. Each case will therefore need to be assessed individually.

3.9 Transport is only provided at the beginning and end of the school/college day. Additional transport will not be funded during the day eg Inter-site transport, work placement transport or induction/enrolment days. Any transport will be limited to one outward journey and one return journey timed for the start and finish of the school/college day

3.10 All decisions made with regards to what assistance will be provided in helping a young person get to school or college will be based on the needs of the young person. The decision to provide help with getting a student to school/college cannot be made to fit in with parents' social or other family or work commitments.

3.11 Where transport assistance is provided this may be shared with other learners who may also attend different sites and courses which have different timetables. This could result in longer travelling times and waiting times at college for the learner. It may be necessary in certain circumstances (eg where learners live within the same location and attend the same college but have different course times) for some learners to make use of a degree of "positive study time" at college. These arrangements will not exceed a 2 hour "window of opportunity" to combine transport operations in order to achieve sustainable transport outcomes, re, reduce congestion, overall emissions and secure cost efficient transport arrangements.

3.12 Each case is looked at individually and before a decision is taken regarding the provision of special transport, it is usual to have obtained the following type of evidence:

- medical evidence as appropriate from either a GP or specialist
- Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which explicitly identified transport support as a need at the time of leaving mainstream secondary or special school.

4) Specialist Residential schools/colleges

4.1 Learners attending specialist residential school/colleges which cannot be accessed by daily travel, help may be available subject to the criteria set out in this policy.

4.2 Travel expenses may be provided based upon the most economical public transport rate for the journey in question, or depending on the individual circumstances a personal transport budget may be considered where this is more economical than travelling in a shared vehicle or a taxi.

4.3 Learners who attend residential school/colleges will still be subject to the charging element although consideration will be given to the limited number of journeys required.

4.4 Approved travelling expenses will be given for one return journey at the start and end of each full academic term and half terms. The allowance for each return journey will be 45p per mile allowance by car, or the most cost effective rail fare, whichever is the cheaper but not exceeding £500 per term.

5) How will students be assessed to see if they are eligible for support?

5.1 The Council will pursue different approaches when considering what is necessary to facilitate attendance at educational establishments by learners in order to make the best use of the limited resources available

5.2 All post 16 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that require assistance with travel will be individually assessed to determine their suitability for travel training. If appropriate these young people will receive the training to allow them to travel independently on public transport.

5.3 Students are encouraged to take advantage of the appropriate concessionary travel arrangements for the journey in question and should apply to Metro for them [details provided in Appendix A.

5.4 If there are any exceptional circumstances, which means the student requires additional help with transport, then he/she can make a written request to their individual college.

5.5 All applications for assistance should be made by completing the Transport request form which can be obtained by contacting;

Post 16
Transport Team
1st Floor, High Street Buildings
High Street
Huddersfield
HD1 2ND

Tel no: 01484 221000
email: school.transport@kirklees.gov.uk

5.6 It is important that application forms are accompanied by the appropriate supporting information as failure to provide this may result in a delay in your application being processed. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the parent/carer for completion.

5.7 Assisted transport eg taxis, specially adapted vehicles will only be provided in exceptional circumstances. If the young person requires special transport it will operate from and to the nearest pick up point where possible.

5.8 Where transport assistance is provided it remains the responsibility of parents or carers to ensure the safety of the young person by making the necessary arrangements for their young person to be accompanied to and from the bus stop or the designated collection/drop off point and during the journey if required.

5.9 Where assisted transport is provided, no variation can be made to the journey without the prior consent of the transport team.

5.10 10 working days notification will be required of all changes or variations to existing journeys.

5.11 Continuing learners will also have their transport needs assessed on an annual basis.

5.12 Completion of the Post 16 Transport Request Form does not mean students are eligible for transport assistance. The form is an expression of interest and checks will be in place to ensure that applications meet the criteria as detailed in this policy.

6) Alternative transport solutions

6.1 Schools and colleges work together to encourage students to take full advantage of independent travel skills training where possible as this will provide them with more opportunity to access a wider range of facilities including public transport. However, not all learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability will be capable of using public transport therefore, each case will be considered on its own merits.

6.2 Transport assistance may be provided in the following ways; (this list is not exhaustive)

- Independent travel training to enable students to use public transport or travel independently
- Subsidised bus pass/travel card
- Taxi or specialist transport to/from home or pick up point
- A contribution towards mileage expenses/personal transport budget

7) Financial assistance and charging

7.1 All students who receive taxi/minibus transport organised by the council will be expected to contribute to the cost. Help towards transport costs may be available to students who attend full-time courses at schools with sixth forms or colleges. If you continue in full time education in Kirklees you may be entitled to apply for financial assistance through the Bursary Fund. (Further details below) If you think you are eligible you will need to apply to the college/school you are attending and provide appropriate evidence as set out by your school/college.

7.2 All students who receive transport will be expected to contribute the equivalent costs of a Metrocard. The cost of a Metrocard for 2016/17 academic year is **£332**. From September 2016 the full cost will be charged at the beginning of the academic year. Overcharges due to absences will be reimbursed at the end of the school year.

7.3 Transport will not be provided if there is an outstanding balance from previous years. Outstanding balances must be paid in full for transport assistance to recommence. Parent/carer who signs the agreement on the Post 16 Transport application form is legally liable for any default in payment and all correspondence will be addressed to this person in pursuance of any debt.

7.4 The person responsible for payment will be charged for the total annual amount due. Payments should be made directly to the Transport Team. Details of how to do this, including instalment arrangements, will be detailed when the charge notification is sent.

7.5 Travel expenses may be provided based upon the most economical public transport rate for the journey in question, or depending on the individual circumstances a Personal Transport Budget may be considered where this is more economical than travelling in a shared vehicle or a taxi.

7.6 If a learner qualifies for transport assistance the parent/carer may opt to receive a personal budget to enable them to arrange their own transport to and from school or sixth form/college. Payments will be made each term and are based on the student's attendance.

7.7 There are no concessions for families on low incomes. However, families in financial difficulties can apply to their college for assistance through a bursary fund.

7.8 Families in financial hardship can apply via the appeals process to have the charges waived. Consideration will be given as to whether the learner has applied for or is in receipt of the 16 – 19 bursary. Where the learners receive a bursary the LA will expect this to be used to contribute towards the learner's daily transport costs.

8) Bursary fund

8.1 Schools and Colleges are allocated funding to award Bursaries which can help to meet the costs of transport. The amount paid and eligibility criteria will be decided by the school/college, except in the case of the most vulnerable students. Vulnerable students, such as those in care, care leavers, those claiming Income Support or disabled learners claiming Employment Support Allowance **and** Disability Living Allowance will be guaranteed a Bursary of £1200 for a full academic year. This will be adjusted pro rata for courses less than a full academic year.

8.2 The school/college are also able to award discretionary bursaries to students who face genuine financial barriers to participation, such as the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

8.3 Schools and colleges set their own eligibility and decide how much to award.

8.4 To find out if you are eligible for a bursary from school/college please contact the relevant school or college directly.

9) Young parents

C2L can help pay for childcare and travel costs for learners aged 19 and under at the start of their course. The additional costs of taking a child to and from childcare may be claimed, within a set weekly limit. C2L does not support the costs of travel to the Learning provider. Learning Providers should be encouraged to support learners to apply for C2L. Further details are available on the Gov.uk website.

10) When should students start to apply for transport support?

10.1 A new application will be required for each year that a student seeks support. The transport policy will be effective from 1 September 2016. Students should apply in the summer term [by the end of June] prior to the start of the academic year.

Huddersfield New College

10.2 The college manage a fleet of vehicles which provide transport direct to the college from the following areas: Holme Valley, Dewsbury and Batley, Thornhill and Mirfield, Heckmondwike, Cleckheaton and Liversedge, Brighouse and Rastrick, Hebden Bridge and Halifax.

10.3 The cost of these services is £200 for an annual pass. Termly passes are also available and students can pay £1 per journey on the bus.

10.4 Learner Support Funds - This is a source of support to enable students to meet 'one-off' expenses, which may prove to be a barrier to effective participation on the course being attended. Examples of the type of expense are:

- expensive course books
- equipment e.g. musical instrument
- field trips
- transport to College

10.5 Students who attend colleges should contact Student Services at the college being attended. Students who attend schools with sixth forms should contact their schools Head of Sixth Form for details and an application form.

11) Apprenticeships and traineeships

Young people involved in apprenticeships and traineeships are entitled to access concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, bus passes or travel cards as detailed in Appendix A.

12) Appeals and complaints process

Kirklees Council has a 2 stage appeal process in place for parents/carers/young people wishing to appeal against a decision not to provide assistance with home to school/college transport.

Stage 1 Officer Appeal - parents/carers/young people would need to set out the basis of your appeal in writing and provide any information you feel will support your case. Your 1st stage appeal would need to be sent to:

SEN Assessment and Commissioning Team (SENACT)
Post 16
Kirkgate Buildings
Byram Street
Huddersfield
HD1 1BY

Stage 2 Member Appeal – If transport is declined at Stage 1 and you wish to appeal this decision, you will need to lodge a Stage 2 Member appeal. The form Notice of School/College Transport Appeal – should be completed (available from the SENACT). Again, you will need to provide any information you feel will support your case. Stage 2 Appeals will be heard by a panel of Councillors.

Further details can be obtained from the following;

Legal and Governance Service
Kirklees Council
Civic Centre 3
Huddersfield
HD1 2TG

13) Who to contact

Students in schools with sixth forms or special schools

Kirklees Council
www.kirklees.gov.uk

Transport Team
High Street Buildings, High Street, Huddersfield HD1 2ND.
Tel: 01484 221000
Email: school.transport@kirklees.gov.uk

SEN Administration Team
Kirkgate Buildings, Byram Street, Huddersfield, HD1 1BY
Tel: 01484 221000
Email: SENACT@Kirklees.gov.uk

Students at Kirklees College
All centres – Financial Support Service
Tel: 01484 437000
Fax: 01484 437057
Email: FinSupp@kirkleescollege.ac.uk

Students at Huddersfield New College
Student Services: Huddersfield New College, New Hey Road, Huddersfield
Tel: 01484 652341
Fax: 01484 649923
Email: info@huddnewcoll.ac.uk
Website: www.huddnewcoll.ac.uk

Students at Greenhead College
Student Services: Greenhead College, Greenhead Road, Huddersfield, HD1 4ES

Tel: 01484 422032
Fax: 01484 518025
Email: college@greenhead.ac.uk
Website: www.greenhead.ac.uk

West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Metro)
Wellington House, 40-50 Wellington Street, Leeds, LS1 2DE
Tel: 01132457676
Website: www.wymetro.com

Calderdale & Kirklees Careers Service
24 High Street, Huddersfield, HD1 2LR
Tel: 01484 226800
Website: www.connexions-direct.com

Dewsbury Careers Centre
Dewsbury Library, Railway Street, Dewsbury, WF12 8EQ
Tel: 01924 324200
Website: www.connexions-direct.com

Batley Careers Centre
YPS, Thomas Street, Batley, WF17 8PR
Tel: 01924 326235
Website: www.connexions-direct.com

