



EDUCATION TRANSPORT FOR STUDENTS AGED OVER 16 YEARS 2012/13 ACADEMIC YEAR

It is very important that students think about transport when they choose the Post 16 provider they would like to attend. The majority of students are not eligible for transport and this will usually have to be organised and paid for by the students themselves.

No student aged over the age of 16 years receives free transport to their school/college although the County Council does offer transport assistance to those students who are entitled and who have made the contribution to the cost of provision.

The County Council's Home to School Transport Policy was reviewed in 2011 to remove some of the more discretionary aspects of previous assistance. Transport assistance for most students aged over 16 is a discretionary provision, however, the County Council remains committed to ensuring that all students receive access to education and will continue to meet best practice expectations set out within Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance.

Subsidised transport assistance will be provided to students over 16 years old in the circumstances set out in this policy.

The County Council will provide help to students who:

- are aged under 19 years old on the 31st August before the start of the academic year (or in the case of continuing courses, were under 19 years old before the start of the academic year in which their course began);

and

- are studying on a full time basis (over 16 hours per week);

and

- attend the school/academy or college nearest to their home address **or** continue their education (attended in Year 11) at the Sixth Form in their nearest secondary school/academy agreed by the County Council to serve their home address (catchment school/academy)*;

and

- the home to school/college journey is **three miles or more**, measured by the shortest pedestrian route

*The County Council will not assist with transport costs for students who attend a school/college further away because their choice of subjects are not available at the nearest establishment. However, in exceptional cases, where the applicant can provide satisfactory written proof that their intended course type and level is appropriate with regard to higher education and/or career outcomes consideration will be given to the request.

The County Council can only provide transport assistance from the student's permanent home address and transport will not be approved to/from more than one location. Transport will only be

provided at the start and end of each school day. Students will be responsible for transport at any other time.

Assistance is normally provided to the nearest appropriate education centre in the form of a ticket to use on an existing bus service.

Where students apply late for a course and then find that it is full, they will not qualify for assistance with transport costs to a provider further away.

All students must agree to a code of conduct before assistance is provided and the County Council reserve the right to impose a ban, or withdraw transport, where unacceptable behaviour risks the safety of others.

Review of Entitlement

Students must complete an application form every new academic year, even if they are continuing on the same course. Transport will also be reviewed following a family move or a change in the student's course or place of learning.

Student contribution to transport costs – new students

Students, or their parents/carers, will have to contribute to the cost of transport to school/college arranged by the County Council. For students accessing Post 16 provision in the 2012/13 academic year the contribution will be **£440** for the whole year. This is based upon a 50% contribution of the average cost of transport.

Transport will not be provided unless payment has been arranged and will be withdrawn where the student does not continue with this contribution throughout the academic year. Students no longer requiring transport must advise the County Council so appropriate arrangements can be made.

The contribution can be paid:

- In one lump sum of £440 or two instalments of £220 by debit or credit card
Parents will need to provide card details on the application form. The first payment will be taken at the time the application is processed and the second payment must be made by 30th November 2012.
- In eight instalments of £55 per month by direct debit
Parents will need to complete a direct debit mandate. The first payment will be taken in September and each subsequent month. Requests for direct debit payments will not be accepted after 15th June 2012.

The contribution is based upon a student receiving help with transport for all three terms (autumn, spring and summer). Where a student only requires assistance part of an academic year, the contribution will be reduced as follows:

- One term only – £190
- Two terms only - £380

Types of Transport Provision

The County Council will decide upon the most cost effective and appropriate travel assistance for each student based upon where they live.

Provision is normally in the form of a pass for a public service bus or one under contract to the Authority. In exceptional circumstances where students live in an area where it is not possible to access an existing bus service or public transport is more costly, consideration will be given to helping with fuel costs for parents/students to use their own vehicle.

The County Council can only provide transport assistance from the student's permanent home address and transport will not be approved to/from more than one location. Assistance is provided for one inward and one outward journey to/from school/college at the beginning and end of each official day. Students will be responsible for transport at any other time.

Assessment Process

Students should submit their application for assistance, and payment or direct debit mandate, to the County Council no later than 15th June 2012 to guarantee transport will be provided for the first day of the September term.

During the peak period (May–September) it may take up to 20 working days before parents/carers receive notification of the decision is sent, and up to 10 working days at other times in the year.

If the application is approved:

Students/parents/carers will receive a letter notifying them that they are entitled to assistance and that their details have been passed to the Integrated Transport Unit. Transport arrangements will then be put in place and students/parents/carers will be advised of the arrangements by letter. This may take some weeks as it is necessary to plan routes taking into account all pupils/students travelling in areas throughout the County. However, successful applicants that have applied and paid by the deadline of 15th June will be notified of the arrangements by the start of term.

If the application is refused:

Where applications for assistance are unsuccessful, students will be informed in writing within the timescale indicated above.

Students/parents/carers who feel they have exceptional circumstances for consideration can write to the Transport & Benefits Team to request that their case is reviewed. Supporting evidence should be enclosed where appropriate, e.g. if the school/college is not the nearest because the student is undertaking a course that is a compulsory requirement to access a specific course of higher education, information supplied by the higher education provider will be required. This may be in the form of pages from the prospectus, or information downloaded from the website of the college/university. If the exceptional circumstances relate to a medical condition, supporting evidence could be in the form of a letter from the student's consultant or GP.

If, after further consideration, the request for assistance is still refused, the applicant has a right to request that their case is considered at a formal appeal hearing.

Financial assistance for students aged 16+:

Gloucestershire County Council does not provide additional assistance for students aged 16+ beyond help with transport to school/college.

Student Support Services at schools, colleges and training providers will be able to provide information on funding available to students that are undertaking full-time courses. Alternatively, information can be found on the Government's website:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/MoneyToLearn/16to19bursary/DG_066955