

TRAVEL SCHEME FOR POST 16 STUDENTS 2015-16 GUIDANCE NOTES

1. INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire County Council will guarantee a seat on one of our existing contracted transport services for a student where an application is received on or before the 29th May 2015 subject to eligibility. Guaranteed seats will not be available for applications received after that time, and will then be subject to availability which will be considered once all statutory students have been allocated. This will be after the first two weeks of the start of the academic year for which you are applying

In submitting an application form by the afore-mentioned date, parents/guardians/carers will be committing to purchasing a seat for the full 2015/16 academic year at a cost of £600. Regrettably discounts, of any kind, will **not** be available if transport is used for only part of the year. Only in circumstances where a family moves home and transport is no longer required will consideration be given to refunding the remaining **full** school terms of transport costs.

Your application is assessed on the address and educational establishment on the form. Should you move address or educational establishment we will require a new form so we may reassess your application and there is no guarantee of transport arrangements being able to be rearranged. Should this be the case then it will be the parents/guardians responsibility for transport provision and costs incurred.

To qualify for transport you will need to ensure you meet the eligibility criteria set out below:

2. ELIGIBILITY

The scheme is available for students who:

- i) are over 16 years of age on or before the 31st August of that year, but
- ii) under 19 years of age on or before the 31st August of that year
- iii) live more than 3 miles walking distance from their designated or nearest school, college or training establishment and
- iv) attending on a full time basis (12 hours or more per week)

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities and Emotional and Behavioural Disorders

- i. reside within the administrative boundary of Northamptonshire;
- ii. have or did have an SEN Statement at age 16 and/or who are formally assessed with a learning difficulty under Section 139a or 140 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 or have emotional, behavioural and/or learning difficulties and/or disabilities, medical conditions, based on criteria agreed with the Further Education Colleges, to ensure priority for students with the greatest need to access specialist educational provision

- iii. reside more than 3 miles walking distance from their nearest suitable educational establishment or training provider (this criterion will be waived in exceptional circumstances);
- iv. attending their nearest suitable school, college or training provider

STUDENTS WHO QUALIFY ON GROUNDS OF LOW INCOME

The contribution of £600 will be reduced by 50% (£300) for students whose parents are in receipt of any of the following benefits. Students who qualify for transport on grounds of a special educational need, and who are from low income households, will be provided transport free of charge and no contribution will be required.

- i) Income Support
- ii) Income Based Jobseeker’s Allowance
- iii) support under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- iv) Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed £16,190
- v) guaranteed element of state pension credit
- vi) entitled to free school meals
- vii) families in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit will also be entitled to financial support. (If you are receiving the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, your documentation will show £0.00 for “Reduction due to your income” as shown below)

Working Tax Credit elements

Basic	from 06/04/2014 to 05/04/2015 (366 days)	<u>£1111.11</u>
Total Working Tax Credit elements (other than childcare)		£1111.11
Reduction due to your income		<u>£ 0.00</u>
Amount for the period		£1111.11

- viii) Employment and Support Allowance (Income-Related)

Current and **FULL** original documentary evidence **i.e. all pages of your benefit documentation** must be provided in all cases and should accompany the application form. These documents will then be returned. The regulations stipulate that the parents/guardians/carers of children who qualify on grounds of low income are obliged to notify this office immediately if their benefits change or cease.

3. HOW THE SCHEME WORKS

If your application is successful, you will either receive an invoice prior to the start of the academic year for the full cost of £600, if this option has been chosen, or every school half term for £100 where the termly payment option has been selected. For those who select the termly payment option, the payment schedule is detailed below.

Term 1	3 rd September 2015 – 23 rd October 2015	to be invoiced 3 rd August ‘15
Term 2	3 rd November 2015 – 18 th December 2015	to be invoiced 12 th October ‘15
Term 3	5 th January 2016 – 12 th February 2016	to be invoiced 14 th December ‘15

Term 4	22 nd February 2016 – 24 th March 2016	to be invoiced 25 th January '16
Term 5	12 th April 2016 – 27 th May 2016	to be invoiced 21 st March '16
Term 6	6 th June 2016 – 20 th July 2016	to be invoices 9 th May '16

Applicants who fail to make payments by mid-way through the following term or misuse the travel facilities may lose their entitlement to travel. In these circumstances Northamptonshire County Council will have the right to recover any costs it has incurred as a result of misuse. Acceptance of the transport indicates that you accept the "Code of Conduct" and where applicable, the conditions of use printed on the reverse of the bus pass. Any misuse of the "code" and or "conditions" e.g. misbehaviour etc. could render the transport invalid and no refund will be given.

Parents/Guardians/Carers and students are required to read and adhere to the "Code of Conduct" which can be found on our website at:
<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/EducationandLearning/Parents/travel/Pages/HtoS.aspx>

Mainstream students only: Applications received after 29th May 2015 are hereby known as non-guaranteed seats. If your child is allocated a non-guaranteed seat under the scheme, we must inform you that, should a new application by a statutory entitled pupil be received, it may be necessary to withdraw the offer of the non-guaranteed seat that your child occupies giving you up to 14 days' notice in writing. A pro rata refund of any fees paid would then be given and you would be required to make alternative transport arrangements.

4. **PAYMENT INFORMATION**

LGSS Finance Department have advised that they are in the process of changing their contact details and payment methods and as a result, we are unable to include these details within the application form or guidance notes. However, an invoice will be issued to all successful applicants containing details of where to direct your queries in relation to the charge and methods of payment.

LATE PAYMENT INTEREST

As appropriate, and in accordance with the "Late Payment of Commercial Debt (Interest) Act 1998", the Council reserves the right to levy a charge for interest and compensation for late payment of **commercial invoices**.

5. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

There are occasions when Northamptonshire Highways Fleet Passenger Services need to cancel transport e.g. adverse weather, issues involving internal recourses i.e. passenger assistants/drivers/vehicles. Every effort is made to ensure this does not happen but should it be unavoidable it is the parent's/guardian's/carer's responsibility to transport the student to and from education and there will be no reimbursement for costs incurred. Every effort is made to restore the transport arrangements as soon as possible.

Please be aware that should transport no longer be required for qualifying statutory age students, current journeys will be cancelled as a consequence, under these circumstances, the processing of the application may be delayed until the statutory transport requirements are confirmed.

If you have a query with regards to the bus pass issued, please email this office at mainstreamtransport@kierwsp.co.uk . If you have a concern with regards to the service being provided, please email the relevant planning team at mainstreamtransport@kierwsp.co.uk for mainstream or SENtransport@kierwsp.co.uk for SEN

Applications which are not required before September 2015 must be cancelled in writing or by email as soon as possible. However if a bus pass has already been dispatched, you will be liable for any costs until it is returned and received in this office along with a covering letter. Where transport is no longer required, you must notify us in writing specifying the reasons for the cancellation and the last date of travel; where a bus pass has been issued, this must accompany the letter. It is important to remember that until we receive the letter of cancellation, and where applicable, the bus pass, you will still be liable for any costs incurred. **Consideration should be given to returning the bus pass by recorded/signed for post.**

Should you require a replacement pass a charge of £15 will be made. The payment must be made to this office and a temporary bus pass will not be issued by the school.

A full copy of the "Post 16 Transport Policy" document is available at <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/EducationandLearning/Parents/travel/Pages/HtoS.aspx>

For general enquiries regarding Post 16 travel please contact us at mainstreamtransport@kierwsp.co.uk for Mainstream students or SENtransport@kierwsp.co.uk for Special Educational Needs students

Do you wish to apply for Free School Meals?

To apply for Free School Meals please visit their website at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk

PLEASE RETAIN THESE GUIDANCE NOTES FOR FUTURE REFERENCE