

Cambridgeshire Policy Statement for Post-16 Students in Full-Time Learning

1 September 2023 – 31 August 2024

Children, Education and Families

0-19 Place Planning and Organisation

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Post-16 Travel Policy Statement 2023 – 2024

1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives

This policy statement sets out the assistance available to help facilitate the attendance of students resident in Cambridgeshire, aged 16-19 (or 25 where the student has Special Education Needs, learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SEND) and has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)) who wish to undertake, or are already undertaking, a course of full-time study.

It includes information on the Council's discretionary subsidised travel policy for students who qualify under the low income criteria as well as signposting all other students to information about arrangements made by post-16 providers in Cambridgeshire, where known, and by various travel operators.

Students who qualify for post-16 travel assistance are all required to make a financial contribution towards the full cost of travel provided by the Council. These charges are reviewed and published annually.

Each year, the Council publishes a booklet entitled "*Post-16 Education Transport in Cambridgeshire – do you qualify for help?*" during the summer which explains the operation of the policy to students and parents. It can be downloaded from the Council's Post-16 Transport webpage – www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport or can be provided in paper form, upon request.

2. Eligibility for subsidised travel support

For those students who choose to undertake a full-time course of education (a minimum of 15 taught hours per week) after the age of 16, the Council will provide support with the cost of travel, in the form of a subsidised termly charge to enable them to undertake a course of study if they meet **all** of the following criteria:

- (a) live within the area where Cambridgeshire is the Local Authority
- (b) are over compulsory school age but under 19 on 31 August 2023 or on a course of further education which started before they reached the age of 19
- (c) are resident at an address which is three miles or more from their nearest appropriate post-16 centre designated by the Council measured by the shortest available walking route
- (d) either the student or a member of their household is in receipt of one of the following –
 - Income Support

- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance (we do not accept contribution-based Job Seekers Allowance)
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- NHS Tax Exemption certificate. We will need to see a photocopy / scanned copy of the entitlement confirmation stating the expiry date
- Universal Credit with a household monthly net income of no more than £935.

Travel assistance will only be provided to allow students to travel during the Council's published academic terms at the start and end of a standard college/sixth form day. Where a college/sixth form requires a student to access their course outside of these times or at a satellite site, the student will need to discuss transport arrangements with their post-16 centre.

In order to apply for travel assistance, students are required to complete an application form online. A paper version is only available upon request.

2.1 Definition of 'nearest appropriate post-16 centre' (NAC)

The school or college that:

- (i) regardless of county boundaries, is nearest to the student's family home; and / or
- (ii) where appropriate, named by the Council for travel purposes as the school or college catchment for the student's registered home address; **and which**
- (iii) offers the main essentials of the course required by the student, both in terms of type and level with regard to higher education and/or career outcomes.

In cases where the nearest centre to the student's home does not offer a particular subject, subject mix (for example at A-Level) or a particular range of module options, travel assistance will not be provided to a more distant centre unless the student is able to provide evidence to demonstrate that their choice of subjects is **essential** in order to pursue a specific career or higher education pathway.

The Education and Skills Act (2008) requires all young people to continue in learning or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. This does not mean that young people must stay on at school once they reach 16; this is still the statutory school leaving age. Instead, they are able to choose from the following:

- Full-time education, such as school, college or home education
- Following a full-time work-based learning route (e.g. Apprenticeship); or
- Undertaking part-time education or training equal to one day a week if they work, are self-employed or volunteer for at least 20 hours per week.

The Council will only provide assistance with travel costs for those students who meet the criteria for subsidised travel support set out above.

3. Payments

For students who meet the criteria detailed in Section 2 their contribution towards cost of travel is £141.75 per term.

Purchase of Spare Seats for Non-Eligible Students

Post-16 students, who are not eligible for travel assistance under the Council's Home to School / College Travel Assistance Policy (see Section 2 above), may be able to purchase a seat on an existing service operating under contract to the Council. It does not apply to public transport services. This is a discretionary policy. Seats are sold on a term-by-term, first come first served basis, subject to availability, at a cost of £278.25 per term, per student. The issue of a ticket does not guarantee that the place will be available in future terms. Students are expected to make their way to and from an existing bus stop.

Applications must be received after the start of the half term holiday prior to the beginning of the term for which the student is applying.

4. Children in Care and Care Leavers

Children in Care and Care Leavers are eligible for free travel assistance provided they are attending their NAC. Proof of status will be required at the time of application in the form of a letter on headed paper from their Social Worker.

5. Rail Travel

Currently the local train operator is offering Cambridgeshire Post-16 students a discount on travel. Updated information regarding offers and discounts for students can be found at:

www.greatnorthernrail.com/tickets/discounts-and-railcards/student-connect

6. Cycling

A cycle allowance is available to students who are entitled to travel assistance but who choose to cycle instead of receiving a bus pass. Students can claim £40 per term, payable in arrears. Retrospective payment can only be considered for the current academic year.

Claim forms are available via the following link –

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport .

7. Use of Travel Pass

Passes issued to students for use on a Council or College contracted service are valid only at the start and end of the official school/college day during term time.

If a student is unable to access their post 16 centre on a contracted service, they may be issued with a pass to travel on a public service bus. This can be used 7 days a week until the expiry date on the pass.

8. Learners who turn 19

Students who commence a full-time course of study at a school or college before they reach the age of 19 will continue to be eligible to receive assistance in accordance with the terms of this policy until they reach the end of that course.

9. Travel assistance for learners aged 16-25 with Special Education Needs, learning difficulties and / or disabilities (SEND)

Students aged 16-19

Post-16 travel assistance is also available for students who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) **and** attend their Nearest Appropriate Centre (NAC). These students **must** live more than 3 miles from this centre or be unable to walk this distance as a result of their SEND. They **must** also be unable to access public service travel (bus or train) **or** a bus service contracted by the Council.

If these criteria are met, they may be eligible for **subsidised** travel up to the age of 19 at a cost of £231 per term. Students who meet these criteria **as well as** the low income criteria set out in section 2 will be entitled to **free** travel assistance.

Students aged 19-25

Free Travel Assistance will be provided for continuing adult learners aged 19-25 who hold an EHCP, only where assistance is demonstrated to be essential to their attendance at their NAC. Students will be required to provide evidence to support their application. For further information please refer to the Post 16 Travel Assistance Policy. Where travel assistance is not agreed as essential, subsidised assistance may be provided, in line with the process outlined above.

Non-eligible students

If the student does not meet the above criteria as they are able to travel on public or contracted services they can apply for subsidised travel support as detailed in Section 2.

Travel Arrangements

Transport needs for each student are assessed on an individual basis, based on their EHCP and information from professionals and parents. Assistance will normally be provided by;

- A place on the Independent Travel Training (ITT) Programme.
- A Personal Transport Budget (PTB).
- A place on an existing vehicle/route.

Individual Transport Arrangements

Individual transport arrangements will be considered for those students with the most complex needs. Supporting information will be required, evidencing the particular needs which prevent require an individual arrangement, which will be considered by a panel of senior officers.

Students with a visual impairments

Students with visual impairments are entitled to a free concessionary bus pass for travel on public services. Applications need to be made on-line via the Council's webpage - <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/buses/free-bus-pass> . Where travel via a public service is not available due to restrictions on the concessionary pass, the Council may consider providing free travel assistance in this instance if the student meets the low income criteria and is attending their NAC.

If a student thinks they might be eligible, they should email their request along with supporting evidence, including the outcome of any application which they have made to the post-16 provider's 16-19 Bursary fund (see section 16 for more details), to Post16transport@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk . Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

10. Application

Online applications for the 2023/2024 academic year will be available on the Council's Post-16 webpage from June 2023 – www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport

Unless stated otherwise, all applications should be made directly to the Council. All applicants must submit a passport size photograph with their application. Where the student is not already in receipt of Free School Meals, supporting documentation will be required to confirm receipt of a qualifying benefit.

11. Appeal

In the event that the Council turns down an application for travel assistance, applicants are entitled to challenge that decision on the following grounds:

- The transport arrangements offered
- Your child's eligibility
- The distance measurement
- The safety of the route

The process is made up of two stages –

Stage One – Review of decision

Applicants have 20 working days from receipt of the decision letter to submit a written request asking for a review of the decision.

Their request should detail why they believe the decision should be reviewed and provide any relevant details they feel should be considered as part of the review process.

Within 20 working days of receipt of the written request, a Council Officer will review the original decision and will send a letter detailing the outcome of the review, which will set out the following information –

- The nature of the decision reached.
- How the review was conducted.
- Information about other departments and / or agencies consulted as part of the process.
- What factors were considered.
- The rationale for the decision reached.
- Information about escalation to Stage Two, if appropriate.

Stage Two – Appeal

Applicants have 20 working days from receipt of the Council's review outcome letter to escalate the matter to Stage Two using the School Transport Appeal Form.

Within 40 working days a Service Appeals Committee, made up of three County Councillors, will be convened to consider the appeal case.

Applicants will be invited to attend the hearing to present their case.

A letter detailing the outcome of the appeal hearing, will be sent within 5 working days of the appeal hearing detailing the following –

- The nature of the decision reached.
- How the appeal was conducted.
- Information about other departments and/or agencies that were consulted as part of the process.
- What factors were considered.

- The rationale for the decision reached; and
- Information about escalation to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

12. Complaints

Students and parents/carers who, having followed the above review and appeal process, remain dissatisfied with the Council’s decision may refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The LGO will not usually consider cases unless they have been through the full review and appeal process.

Further information regarding how to make a complaint to the Ombudsman can be found on their webpage www.lgo.org.uk.

13. Contact Information

Eligibility Queries:

Post16edtransport@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Transport Queries:

Edtransport@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Or via telephone:

0345 045 5208 (Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 1pm)

Operator contact information

	Contact
Traveline	0871 200 22 33 Web: www.traveline.info
National Rail Enquiries	08457 484 950 Web: www.nationalrail.co.uk
Great Northern Rail	03450 264 700 Web: www.greatnorthernrail.com
Go-Whippet	01954 230011 Web: www.go-whippet.co.uk
Stagecoach	01223 433 250 Web: www.stagecoachbus.com

14. 16-19 Bursary Fund Information

Post 16 centres make discretionary bursary awards to students to help them overcome the individual barriers to participation they face, for example with meeting the cost of travel, or to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing. These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate.

15. College Run Transport

Students are advised to contact their College directly for the most up to date information regarding their own transport arrangements. The contact details can be found below.

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Cambridge Regional College Cambridge and Huntingdon Campus	Telephone: 01223 418200 College website – www.camre.ac.uk
Peterborough Regional College	Telephone: 0345 872 8722 College website - www.peterborough.ac.uk
College of West Anglia	Wisbech Campus Telephone: 01945 582561 Kings Lynn Campus Telephone: 01553 761144 Cambridge Campus Telephone: 01223 860701 College website www.cwa.ac.uk
Long Road Sixth Form College	Telephone: 01223 507400 College website www.longroad.ac.uk
Hills Road Sixth Form College	Telephone: 01223 247251 College website www.hrsfc.ac.uk
Abbey College	Tel: 01487 812352 Web: www.abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk
Astrea Sixth Form St Neots	Tel: 01480 353535 Web: www.astreasixthformstneots.org
Comberton Village College	Tel: 01223 265470 Web: www.combertonsixthform
Cottenham Village College	Tel: 01954 288944 Web: www.cvcweb.net
Cromwell Community College	Tel: 01354 692193 Web: www.cromwellcc.org.uk
Ely Sixth Form Centre	Tel: 01353 652818 Web: www.elycollege.com
Hinchingbrooke School	Tel: 01480 375700 Web: www.hinchingbrookeschool.net
Impington Village College	Tel: 01223 200402 Web: www.impington.cambs.sch.uk
Neale Wade Community College	Tel: 01354 606000 Web: www.neale-wade.org
Parkside Community College	Tel: 01223 310118 Web: www.parksidesixth.org.uk
Sawtry Community College	Tel: 01487 830701 Web: www.sawtrycc.com
Sir Harry Smith Community College	Tel: 01733 703991 Web: www.sirharrysmith.cambs.sch.uk

St Ivo School	Tel: 01480 375400 Web: www.stivoschool.org
St Peter's School	Tel: 01480 459581 Web: www.stpeters.cambs.sch.uk
The Oakes College	Tel: 01223 242931 Web: www.oakescc.org
Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology (CAST)	Tel: 01223 724300 Web: www.cast.education