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

1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020

People and Communities

Learning

0-19 Place Planning and Organisation
Box No: OCT1221
The Octagon
Shire Hall
Cambridge
CB3 OAP
1. **Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives**

This policy statement sets out the support 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 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 transport 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 transport operators.

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

The Council publishes a booklet entitled “Post-16 Education Transport in Cambridgeshire – do you qualify for help?” during the summer term before students are due to start a new post-16 course of study or continue their studies in those cases where the course runs for more than one year. This booklet 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](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport) or can be provided in paper form, upon request.

2. **Eligibility for discretionary transport 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 at the nearest appropriate post-16 centre designated by the Council if they:

(a) live within the area where Cambridgeshire is the Local Authority  
(b) are over compulsory school age but under 19 on 31 August 2019 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 measured by the shortest available walking route  
(d) either the student or a member of their household are 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 card stating the expiry date
• Universal Credit with a household monthly net income of no more than £935

Transport support 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 assistance with transport, students are required to complete an application form online. A paper version is 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 transport 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 NAC does not offer a particular subject, subject mix (for example at A-Level) or a particular range of module options, transport 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 pathways.

3. Raising the Participation Age (RPA)

The Education and Skills Act (2008) requires that young people stay in education or training until their 18th Birthday.

The requirement is for all young people to continue in learning or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. RPA does not mean that young people must stay on at school once they reach 16; this is still the statutory school leaving age. 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 support with transport costs for those students who meet the criteria in Section 2 above.

4. Payments

Students who meet the criteria detailed in Section 2 their contribution towards cost of travel is £120 per term.

Discretionary Policy – 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. This is a discretionary policy and is subject to the availability of spare seats on a term by term basis. It does not apply to public transport services. Discretionary seats are sold on a termly basis at a cost of £240 per term, per student. Seats are issued on a first come first served basis, subject to availability. 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 you are applying for.

5. Visually Impaired Students

Students with a visual impairment 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 we may consider providing free transport in this instance if the student meets the low income criteria and is attending their NAC.

If you think you might be eligible, please email your request along with supporting evidence including the outcome of any application for the 16-19 fund from the college to Post16transport@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Each application will be considered on a case by case basis.
6. **Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

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

7. **Rail Travel**

Currently the local train operator is offering Cambridgeshire Post-16 students a 50% discount on travel.

8. **Cycling**

A cycle allowance is available to students who are entitled to subsidised transport but choose not to receive a bus pass but to cycle instead. 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](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport).

9. **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 service bus. This can be used 7 days a week until the expiry date on the pass.

10. **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 support in accordance with the terms of this policy until they reach the end of that course.
11. **Transport assistance for learners aged 16-25 with Special Education Needs, learning difficulties and / or disabilities**

To be eligible for consideration for post-16 SEND transport assistance by the Council, a student **must be unable** to access public service transport (bus or train) **or** a bus service contracted by the Council **or** walk to school/college and **must be** enrolled on a full-time course either in school (mainstream or special) or college of further education. This must be the nearest appropriate centre (NAC) to their home address offering an appropriate course for that student.

If these criteria are met they may be eligible for **subsidised** transport up to the age of 25. The rates of subsidised transport are reviewed annually. Students who meet these criteria **as well as** the low income criteria set out in section 2 will be entitled to free transport.

If the student is eligible for support with transport costs, the Council will **always** explore first whether their parents should be asked to use their own transport and be remunerated for their fuel costs. All claims for assistance need to be agreed in writing before transport commences and payment can be made. Where there is no parent/carer/family member who can transport the student, the Council will consider the provision of subsidised transport and apply the annual charge as a contribution to the cost of the transport as detailed above.

12. **Application**

Online applications for the 2019/2020 academic year will be available on the Post-16 webpage from June 2019 – [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport)

Unless stated otherwise, all transport applications should be made directly to the Council. All applicants must submit a passport size photograph with their initial 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.

13. **Appeal**

In the event that the Council turns down an application for transport assistance, applicants are entitled to challenge that decision.

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 the applicant feels 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 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 review 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)

14. 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 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](http://www.lgo.org.uk).
15. **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)

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<th>Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cambridge Regional College</td>
<td>Telephone: 01223 418200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambridge and Huntingdon Campus</td>
<td>College website – <a href="http://www.camre.ac.uk">www.camre.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>Peterborough Regional College</td>
<td>Telephone: 0845 872 8722</td>
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<td>College website - <a href="http://www.peterborough.ac.uk">www.peterborough.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>College of West Anglia</td>
<td>Isle Campus Telephone: 01945 582561</td>
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<td>Kings Lynn Campus Telephone: 01553 761144</td>
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<td>Cambridge Campus Telephone: 01223 860701</td>
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<td>College website <a href="http://www.cwa.ac.uk">www.cwa.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>Long Road Sixth Form College</td>
<td>Telephone: 01223 507400</td>
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<td>College website <a href="http://www.longroad.ac.uk">www.longroad.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>Hills Road Sixth Form College</td>
<td>Telephone: 01223 247251</td>
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<td>College website <a href="http://www.hrsfc.ac.uk">www.hrsfc.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>Abbey College</td>
<td>Tel: 01487 812352</td>
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<td>Web: <a href="http://www.abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk">www.abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk</a></td>
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<td>Astrea Sixth Form St Neots</td>
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<td>Comberton Village College</td>
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<td>Cottenham Village College</td>
<td>Tel: 01954 288944</td>
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<td>Cromwell Community College</td>
<td>Tel: 01354 692193</td>
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<td>Ely Sixth Form Centre</td>
<td>Tel: 01353 652818</td>
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<td>Hinchingbrooke School</td>
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<td>Neale Wade Community College</td>
<td>Tel: 01354 606000</td>
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<td>Web: <a href="http://www.neale-wade.org">www.neale-wade.org</a></td>
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