

Post 16 Mainstream Home to School/College Transport Assistance Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These FAQs should be read alongside the published policy available [here](#)

- **What is changing and why?**

Leicestershire County Council is continuing to face significant financial challenges with budget plans recently announced to save another £50m across all areas of the council. This means difficult decisions about services in all areas of the council's work.

The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide home to school/college transport free of charge to students Post 16 in the same way it does for children aged 5-16 years.

Following a full public consultation during the autumn term 2017, the Council's Cabinet agreed on 9th March 2018 to change the School Transport policy for pupils as listed below. The changes will take effect **from September 2019**, irrespective of the transport and/or charges that may have applied to students up to that point i.e. there will be no transitional arrangements. This means, for example, that you will no longer receive a school bus pass or public transport season tickets provided by the council.

What are the key points of the new policy?

Government guidance has raised the age to which young people have a duty to stay in education, employment or training i.e. this is not about raising the school leaving age (this remains 16), as there are other opportunities than just staying at school, such as apprenticeships. There has been no change in the legislation governing transport for those aged 16+ so this remains a discretionary service that the Council doesn't have to provide. However, the new policy below will still provide a limited choice of transport options for 16+ students.

Transport assistance is available for those pupils above statutory school age if they live more than three miles from the school/college attended, if the student is aged 16, 17 or 18 when the course is started **and**:

- The school is the nearest school sixth form or nearest freestanding Post 16 Further Education/Sixth Form college.

and in addition to provide transport assistance, over the qualifying distances and ages listed above, to one of the following:

either

- the nearest freestanding Leicestershire Further Education/Sixth Form college

or

- the nearest Leicestershire school sixth form but to continue providing transport only to the catchment school with a sixth form in areas where there have been no changes to catchments or age range since May 2012 (frozen areas) **Note:** Where a student lives in a frozen area they will only be provided transport to the frozen area school sixth form school or their nearest school sixth form. Where the nearest school sixth form is not the frozen school sixth form and is in another local authority area e.g. Leicester City, there will be no additional entitlement to any other Leicestershire school.

Assisted transport for 16+ students does not take account of the availability of courses or subjects and won't allow for students to attend a school or college which is further away if it offers their chosen course.

Transport assistance will only be provided in the form of a grant for those students eligible according to the criteria above **and:**

either

- are from a qualifying low income family (students entitled to free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits or their maximum level Working Tax Credit)

or

- are "rurally isolated" which means they live more than a total of 75 minutes away (one way, measured in the morning) from their qualifying school, measured door to door using public transport (to include bus, train and commercial 'school special services' using published timetables, but not LCC contracted school buses). The journey time includes any walking time (assessed at 4mph) from home to first vehicle collection point, waiting time for connecting services and walking time from last vehicle drop off point to school/college gates. Any assessed journey must allow arrival time for the normal start time of the school/college and return journeys must be within a reasonable period of time after the normal school/college close time.

Can I still get a school bus pass or a taxi provided by the council?

No. The changes to the policy mean that the only type of assistance that the Council will offer to eligible students from September 2019 will be fixed grant of £150 per academic year. This means that the Council will no longer provide Post 16 mainstream students with any of the following types of transport assistance (even if they already receive one of these at Post 16):

- a Council provided school bus place (but see the section about limited "farepaying" options below)
- a bus pass for a commercially provided school special bus service

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- a bus or train pass for public transport e.g. Arriva
- taxi or minibus transport
- a mileage allowance (petrol refund)

How can I apply for a grant if my child is Post 16?

Qualifying rurally isolated or students from low income families (students entitled to free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits or their maximum level Working Tax Credit) can apply for the grant through the online application form with evidence to support the eligibility claim. Post 16 application forms will be available early in 2019; we will notify you by email when they are available for you to apply, but please also keep an eye on our website for updates. You should complete your transport application form by the end of March 2019. We will then check your child's eligibility and aim to inform you as soon as possible after that, but all of the final decisions on what travel assistance the Council will offer will be made by June 2019.

If my child qualifies for the grant how much will this be?

Your child will be entitled to a grant of £150 that they can use to support travel to school/college in any way they choose. On confirmation of attendance, the grant will be paid into your nominated bank account for the full amount at the start of academic year. If you apply part way through a year this will be reduced by a pro-rata amount. Similarly if your child leaves Post 16 education or otherwise becomes ineligible to the grant the Council will seek to recover any appropriate pro-rated amount (£50 per term).

Do I have to provide receipts for how I spend the grant?

No, but as part of your application you will be agreeing to only spend the grant for legitimate expenses towards home to school travel.

Are there any transitional arrangements?

No. The new policy on only providing grants to Post 16 students affects all students concerned as of September 2019 (no transition rules for those who currently have had other means of assistance such as bus passes, train passes or taxis etc.).

If I am refused transport assistance, can I appeal against the decision?

Yes, an appeals procedure is available if you think the policy has been applied incorrectly. You cannot, however, appeal against a decision solely because you disagree with the policy. If you feel that you have not received the standard of service you expect or that the Council may not be providing an adequate service in a particular area, you can use the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

Are there any other alternatives if my child is not eligible to transport assistance from the Council?

Yes. Where the Council still provides contracted in school bus services it also operates a farepaying system where spare seats on school buses it provides can be applied and paid for – but note that farepaying places are extremely limited and the Council cannot guarantee that your application will be successful so you are advised to consider alternative transport arrangements in case we cannot meet your request. The Council will not retain extra seats just for those in Sixth Form. Details on how you can apply for a farepaying place will be provided when application forms are launched online early in 2019. Further information on farepaying transport is available [here](#).

Many academies now operate their own buses. Similarly a number of bus companies are providing commercial “school special” bus services – the school can provide information on these options.

There may also be local bus services that match the journeys that school pupils and students need – Traveline can provide information:



- **What other support is available to me?**

There are a number of other things that can support families with getting their child to and from school/college as follows:

- Bursary funds: Schools, colleges and training providers have funds to help students studying a full-time course and who think they might struggle with the costs for their studies (including for transport). For advice speak to your school/college's student support services or course tutors.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 Bursaries:

1. Vulnerable student bursary: you could get a bursary worth up to £1,200, depending on your circumstances and benefits.
2. Discretionary bursary: you could get a discretionary bursary if you need financial help but don't qualify for a vulnerable student bursary. Your

education or training provider decides how much you get and what it's used for.

More information on bursaries can be found by clicking [here](#).

Any other queries?

If you have any further queries please contact us, preferably by email.

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Post: Assessments Team

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