

## Brighton & Hove City Council

### **Transport Policy Statement for Students aged 16–18 in Further Education, Continuing Students aged 19 and over and 19-24 Year Old Students with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities**

Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age upwards receiving education or training. It is for each council to decide the arrangements which are appropriate for its area.

#### **This statement describes the policy of Brighton & Hove City Council for 2019/20**

The Council's policy for providing travel assistance to secondary age children and young people is:

- to promote independent travel for all secondary age children unless it is clear that, following an assessment, they cannot travel to school safely due to their special educational needs and/or disability
- to support parents and schools/colleges to encourage and promote independent travel for children at secondary school age
- to develop sustainable methods of transport such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport to replace taxi travel to and from schools and colleges
- for schools and parents to work collaboratively to develop children and young people's independence by actively supporting independent travel trainers, as appropriate, to work with children for agreed periods of time.
- to develop life skills, self-confidence and self-esteem of children and young people within their local communities

This policy statement applies to young people studying schools, colleges or other mainstream further education providers. The same principles apply to the Council's policy for travel assistance for students aged 16-18 in further education, continuing students aged 19 and over and 19-24 year old students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

#### **Public Transport arrangements available to all students**

Learners aged 16 – 18 may access the following concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards made available by transport providers.

#### **Bus Travel**

The following concessions are operated by **Brighton & Hove Bus Company** (see contact details below):

- The **Bus ID** card gives discounts from age 5-18 until the end of August following the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. There is no charge for the card.
- Special deals available to **NUS card** holders.
- Both cards give discounts on **SAVER** tickets, including 3 month tickets.

There are no restrictions on the use of the **BUS ID** card or saver tickets. These can be used at any time, including evenings and weekends.

Further details about discounts offered by Brighton & Hove buses within the city and bus travel in neighbouring counties for all 16-18 year olds can be found at:

<http://www.buses.co.uk/tickets/busid.aspx>

Please note that **Bus ID** cards are valid only up to the August after a student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **Rail Travel**

In previous years Brighton & Hove City Council, in partnership with West & East Sussex County Councils, has negotiated a scheme called the 'Sussex Student Card' that allows rail season tickets between home and school or college to be purchased at two thirds of the usual cost. The discount is available to full-time FE students aged 16 and over who are studying at publicly funded schools or colleges and whose home address is in Brighton & Hove. The continuation of this scheme is under negotiation.

The discount applies:

- to any train journey within the **Southern Railways** and **Southeastern** areas (not including London);
- to season tickets of between one month and one year; and
- currently, if the discounted fare is not less than £8 a week or the equivalent (this works out at roughly £10 a week full fare)

This is a separate scheme that cannot be combined with other discount schemes such as Unizone.

The Sussex Student railcard allows purchase of season tickets which may be used at any time of the day.

Should the scheme continue for 2019 /2020 forms for the **rail discount ticket** schemes will be available for students to collect from their post-16 establishment at the start of the autumn term.

Details of the **rail discount ticket scheme** can be found at:

<http://www.southernrailwaytickets.com/buytickets/furthered/FurtherEd.php?sEvent=TicketDetails>

Details of the **Brighton Unizone** can be found at:

<http://www.southernrailway.com/tickets-and-fares/ticket-types/16/>

A **Sussex Student card** should be obtained for regular discounted travel during the week before 10am.

Young people aged 16 to 25 can purchase a **young person's railcard** that entitles them to one third off travel throughout Britain after 10am on weekdays and off peak. Details at:

<http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>

## **Eligibility for Travel Assistance**

The Council recognises that some students may not be able to travel to school or college independently or may not yet be ready to do so. The council expects that, where possible, parents or carers should be responsible for making travel arrangements for students. This could include support from their broader family networks. The council will consider offering some additional direct financial help towards travel costs for young people with low incomes in exceptional circumstances.

All students should discuss with their school or college student support service whether they may be eligible with transport costs from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

In all cases in order to qualify for assistance:

- Students must be living in the area of Brighton and Hove City Council when their course starts.
- Students must be taking or about to take a full-time further education course. A full time course is a course more than 15 hours a week. We do not normally offer assistance to students taking part-time courses. However, students who feel they may have an exceptional case may put this in writing and return an application form for special consideration.
- Students must be taking or about to take a full-time further education course such as 'A' Level, GCSE, GNVQ, BTEC National Diploma, Art Foundation etc.
- Assistance is not given for attendance at private schools or colleges.
- Students must be aged under the age of 19 on 31<sup>st</sup> August before their course starts.
- We will not normally offer support for journeys from home to college that exceed 15 miles or one and a quarter hours' travelling time. The council does not have a budget to help with residential costs.
- If students want to attend a school or college outside Brighton & Hove they would be eligible for assistance only in cases where the course they want to study is essential to their career plan and there is no suitable course at a school or college campus in Brighton & Hove or they have special educational needs and there is no course appropriate to their needs in Brighton & Hove.
- The student must be travelling over three miles to their nearest appropriate provider.
- If students are Looked After by the Local Authority the same eligibility criteria apply as for other children/students. However arrangements' should be made and funded by the carer, as funding for this is provided in the allowances paid by the councils fostering teams (agencies and in house) to carers.
- If a student chooses to change career direction or course this may affect their eligibility for travel assistance.

For students with low income applying for travel assistance they or their families must be receiving one of the following benefits or tax credits:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)

Eligible students will be reimbursed by calculating the cheapest available fare for the journey and paying those expected costs which exceed the first £10 per week. As a Saver ticket bought with a Bus ID Card allows travel across the City for less than £10 per week, this means that, in normal circumstances, help is not offered to students attending colleges within Brighton & Hove

For students with learning difficulties or disabilities consideration will be made of the following points:

- The student's learning difficulties or disabilities
- Whether a similar course is available at a nearer school or college
- If a Motability car has been provided for the benefit of the applicant, consideration will be given as to whether this vehicle could be used to transport the applicant to school/ college. In such circumstances the agreed mileage rate will be paid (30p per mile).
- The length of complexity of the journey and whether parents or carers could reasonably be expected to arrange transport or act as a chaperone themselves. If parents/ carers or other family members are not available this should be fully explained in the application.

In all cases a transport panel will review the application, take into account the factors raised and decide if travel assistance will be provided. The panel will decide the form of travel assistance to be offered.

Any applicant for whom travel assistance has been agreed by the transport panel must apply again each academic year. It should not be assumed that the same form of travel assistance will be agreed for a further year – each case will be considered against the policy applicable at the time of application. Travel assistance will not be withdrawn in the course of an academic year, except where a programme of independent travel training has been completed successfully or a student's circumstances have changed significantly.

Parents/ carers must discuss travel to work experience with the college. The council will not make arrangements or provide funding for travel to work experience placements.

### **Contacts**

The Post 16 transport team can be contacted by telephone on: **01273 295196** or by email at: [Post16Transport@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Post16Transport@brighton-hove.gov.uk). New requests for special educational need and disabilities (SEND) transport should be made via the SEN Team. The special educational needs team can be contacted on: **01273 29552** or by email at: [sen.team@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:sen.team@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

### **Right of Review/ Appeal**

Any applicant who has been refused assistance with travel is entitled to ask for a review of the decision. Any request for review should be made in writing or by email to the Post 16 Transport Team within 20 working days of the council's decision. Within 20 working days of receipt of the applicant's request a senior officer within the council will review the decision.

If the applicant is unhappy with the outcome of the review they have 20 working days in which to appeal further to an independent panel of officers. The panel will be made up of three officers of the council who had no involvement in the original decision to refuse help with transport. The appeal panel will review the appeal within 40 days of receipt of the request. The panel does have the power to reach a different decision in individual cases.

The applicant has the right to make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) if they consider that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if they consider there to have been any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled. The internal review/ appeal process must be completed before making a referral to the LGO.

### **Complaints**

If an applicant is unhappy with any aspect of the transport service, they should talk to the Post 16 Transport Team. The council will liaise with the taxi drivers on behalf of the applicant. The Post 16 transport team at the council can be contacted as above.

If the applicant complains about transport to the school/college, the school/college will inform the council and ask them to investigate the complaint. If a complaint about a transport provider is upheld, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken by the transport provider or in extreme cases the contract with a travel company may be terminated.