

## **Important information on post 16 transport**

Where students can access a viable public transport system to get to and from their place of study they are expected to use it. A seat on a school bus will not be provided.

### **How do I find out if I have access to a viable public transport system to get to and from school/college?**

The Traveline website will provide you with timetable information. Their website can be found at <http://jplanner.travelinenortheast.info/>

### **What do I then do if I am able to travel to and from school/college via public transport?**

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements which includes purchasing the appropriate travel pass through commercial operators such as Arriva, Go North East, Stagecoach etc. The following link <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=17438> provides information and where appropriate links to bus company websites regarding details of student saver tickets that can be purchased from the major suppliers of local bus services. Information is provided with regards to the type of tickets available to purchase along with payment options. Information is also provided regarding bus services paid for and organised by Northumberland College.

### **What should I do if I can't access public bus services for the journey to and from my local school or college or the journey via public bus is too long, involves poor connections, too many connections etc?**

You can apply for a place on a school bus service arranged by the Council. Application forms can be found online at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=457> Make sure you complete the correct application form i.e. for Post-16 students.

A place on a school bus will be provided in return for an annual payment of £600. This can be made as a one-off payment of £600 or via an initial deposit of £200 and the remaining balance of £400 paid by direct debit. One invoice will be raised this year for £600.00 on receipt of a completed application form. Attached to the invoice will be a Direct Debit mandate and a letter to notify the parent that they must make an initial payment of £200.00. The letter will clearly state that the Direct Debit Mandate only relates to the remaining balance of £400.00. This letter will also notify parents that **NO** pass will be issued until the first payment of £200.00 and the mandate has been completed and returned.

Further details regarding payment arrangements are provided once an application has been submitted. Please see further information below on help available for families who may struggle to meet this financial obligation.

### **What general criteria must I satisfy if I need to apply for a place on a school bus?**

A place on a school bus will normally only be considered if you meet **all** of the following criteria:

- You are a Northumberland resident; and
- You are 16 years old or over, but 18 or under, on 31 August 2015. Arrangements will not be made for new courses that start in Year 14 but will be made for courses that start in Year 13 and continue into Year 14; and
- Your course is undertaken at the nearest appropriate learning provider, as defined below; and
- Your course is full time, which is a minimum of 12 hours a week, within one academic year; and
- Your course is at a higher level than your previous achievements and provides appropriate progression to further learning or employment; and
- Your course is foundation learning, level 1, 2 or 3, but **not** level 4 or higher education or if you are an Apprentice.
- You live 3 or more miles, by the shortest route indicated by the local authority, from the learning provider of your choice, or you live less than 3 miles from the learning provider of your choice but the route is not deemed to be a safe walking route by the Authority.
- Your estimated journey time to your chosen educational establishment will be no more than 75 minutes (150 minutes daily travelling time). This calculation will be based on using public transport, typically local bus services, to get to and from your learning provider; and
- The cost to the Council of your proposed journey is an efficient use of public resources; and
- You make the appropriate contribution (if any) towards the costs as determined by the Authority.

**For the purposes of this policy the nearest appropriate learning provider is as follows:**

- the educational establishment you want to attend is the nearest establishment to your home address; or
- the educational establishment you want to attend is not the nearest school but is the school named by the local authority as the catchment area school for your home address; or

- the educational establishment you want to attend is not the nearest school but is the nearest school which would be consistent with your religion or beliefs and you supply the necessary evidence of that religion or belief; or
- the educational establishment you want to attend is not the nearest establishment to your home address but it is the nearest that offers the course you wish to study in accordance with the following:
  1. For a student wishing to study one or more A-levels, this will be the nearest educational establishment that offers 9 or more different A-levels. For the avoidance of doubt, the student's choice of A-levels, A-level subject combination, timetable clashes etc. will not be taken into account when determining eligibility.
  2. For a student wishing to undertake a vocational course, this will be to the nearest education establishment that offer the relevant vocational course at the appropriate level. To facilitate this, all courses will be categorised by the Authority under "vocational areas" and assistance with transport will only be provided for students who express a desire to study at their nearest educational establishment that offers a course under their chosen vocational area at the appropriate level of study. The full list of vocational areas is set out in the Post 16 Transport Policy which you can access via <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=457> **For the avoidance of doubt, the student's precise choice of course within each of these areas of vocational study will not be taken into account when determining eligibility.**

Normally, the only exception in applying these criteria will be where an individual has applied to the appropriate provider at the appropriate time, but has been refused admission by the school/college, in which case that establishment will be ignored when considering eligibility. In such cases, written evidence of refusal will be required.

### **What help is available for students from low income backgrounds who are entering Post-16 education?**

Free transport will be provided by the Council where a student from a low income background meets all the general eligibility criteria as set out above. Criteria for eligibility on low income grounds are as follows:

- income support
- income-based jobseeker's allowance
- income-related employment and support allowance
- guarantee credit of pension credit
- Child Tax Credit (but not entitled to Working Tax Credit) where your annual income, as shown on your Tax Credit award notice, is £16,190 or less
- Also entitled are:
  - 16–18-year-olds receiving the above benefits or tax credits in their own right.

- asylum seekers in receipt of support provided under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

This list can be found on the Post-16 transport application form. You must complete a Post 16 application form if you are applying for free transport on low income grounds. An assessment will be undertaken to verify the information you have provided. If we are able to verify it a free travel permit will be issued to you that will enable you to travel on a school bus or on a public bus service, whichever is appropriate.

If you do not meet the low income criteria outlined immediately above but are suffering financial hardship then assistance with transport costs may be available through the award of discretionary 16-19 bursary funds. Financial assistance from this fund is usually made available to students in arrears and is based upon a student's attendance at school. Please contact the Student Support Officer at your school for further details.