

Transport Policy Statement for learners aged 16-18 in further education and continuing learners aged 19 and over

Name of Local Authority: Worcestershire County Council

Department responsible: Learning and Skills

1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives (this section should give an overview/statement of intent of what the Local Authority's transport policy is and what the subsequent desired outcomes are).

The aim of the policy is to provide high quality transport services as efficiently, economically and sustainably as possible to ensure that students get to school or college in a reasonable time, travel in a safe environment and arrive ready to study. This statement is used in conjunction with the County Council's Home to School Travel and Transport and SEN Transport Policy's Transport Assistance is offered to a student who meets the relevant eligibility criteria, submit a completed application and make the required contribution.

General rules to qualify for transport

- Must be a resident in Worcestershire
- In year 12 or above and 19 years old or under on 31 August
- Is a full time student (12 hours or more timetabled sessions per week) - the course can be at entry level or at level 1, 2, or 3. Transport assistance is not given to higher education courses (level 4 and above, such as Foundation Degrees or Higher National Diplomas).
- Is studying a course that is funded by Worcestershire County Council – transport support is not given to students paying fees for their tuition, or studying as part of a paid apprenticeship
- Is studying at the nearest school, college or Local Authority funded training provider offering the level of course.

Each entitled student including learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will be required to make a contribution towards their travel. Students or parents who may require financial assistance with the associated costs of continuing in post 16 education, should make enquiries with the education providers Student Bursary arrangements. Charges will be made for the replacement of any lost or damaged travel passes. Please see our website for current prices –

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/SchoolTransport

The Local Authority recognizes that whilst students in mainstream education would normally require 2 years study to complete their course, learners with learning difficulties and disabilities may take longer to complete their program of learning or training. Therefore these students will only be asked to contribute for the first 2 years of travel. Any subsequent travel assistance support that is provided in the 3rd year or beyond will not require any further contribution.

Worcestershire County Council will determine suitability of transport, based on reasonable cost, travel and waiting times to enable access to the education provider.

Transport support is normally

- A Seve7n Card travel pass for existing public bus
- The provision of a travel pass for existing contracted services where seats are available. Transport in this case will be provided only to coincide with the start / finish of the school/college day.
- In exceptional circumstances, where neither a public service, nor a contracted school bus is available within a reasonable time of the start/finish of the school or college day, an allowance may be paid for use towards the cost of making their own travel arrangements.
- Students with learning difficulties or disabilities will have transport provided appropriate to their needs, to the nearest establishment that meets their needs.

NB – Students may be required to make their way up to one mile to the nearest boarding point, door to door transport will only be provided in exceptional circumstances.

2. Please provide details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for learners aged 16–18 and who provides them. Please provide details of any costs to the learner.

Worcestershire County Council, in partnership with local colleges and bus operators offers a subsidised travel scheme for use on public transport buses across the county 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Worcestershire Seve7n Card Scheme

The Severn Card is a multi-operator bus pass, allowing the holder of the pass to travel on any bus service included within the scheme during term time.

Multi-operator student bus pass

- Valid 24/7 on most bus services in Worcestershire
- For students aged under 19, or mature students of sponsor colleges
- Can be bought as an Annual, Termly or Half-Termly pass
- There are 3 different “Zones” of travel (see below for full details):
 - Zone 1 : Urban Zone
 - Zone 2 : UrbanPLUS
 - Zone 3 : Countywide

You can purchase the following Severn Cards in advance:

- Half-Termly valid term-time only
- Termly valid term-time, and also during the half-term holiday
- Annual valid from 1st Sept to 31st Aug, inclusive of all school/college holidays including the Summer

You can also pay annually (3 x term passes will be provided) by monthly direct debit (9 payments, from October to June). Mandates must be returned by August 30th.

All of the above can be purchased for any of the 3 Zones (see below for description of Zones).

Please see our website for details of current prices for each Zone –

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/SchoolTransport

Zone 1 : Urban Zone

Travel within the boundaries of urban areas:

- Bromsgrove (inc. Catshill)
- Droitwich
- Evesham
- Wyre Forest Towns (travel anywhere between Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport)
- Malvern
- Pershore
- Redditch
- Worcester City (inc. Norton Barracks)

Zone 2 : Urbanplus Zone

- Travel between neighbouring towns (i.e. Evesham to Pershore, or Droitwich to Worcester)

OR

- Travel from a village in to the nearest town (i.e. Hallow to Worcester, or Wychbold to Bromsgrove)

Zone 3 : Countywide Zone

- Travel within the boundaries of Worcestershire

Operator's own bus fares

In some instances it may be more economical for students to pay a bus operator's own bus fare. Bus fares vary greatly across Worcestershire and we strongly suggest you undertake your own research to decide whether a pre-paid Severn Card or the special rate fares are indeed the best value for your circumstances.

For public bus services, contact Traveline on 0871 200 2233, who can provide times and route details, and contact numbers to find out how much journeys will cost plus details of any discounts or concessionary fares and tickets that may be available.

Operators may offer weekly, monthly or termly tickets or student passes. Please contact the bus operator directly for more details. Public transport contact details can also be found at

www.worcestershire.gov.uk

A disabled person or someone with learning difficulties may be eligible for a free bus pass issued. The pass will allow free off-peak travel (between 9.30am and 11pm Monday to Friday and all day weekends and Bank Holidays) on all local buses anywhere in England – Worcestershire County Council extends this to allow travel at any time of the day, 7 days per week if the journey starts or ends in Worcestershire. A companion pass may also be available if you need assistance to travel. Travel Plans - most Worcestershire schools have Travel Plans in place. A School Travel Plan is a written document which outlines a series of practical steps for improving safety on the journey to and from school. It will assist pupils and parents in identifying sustainable transport options. Please contact the school directly if you wish to see their Travel Plan.

Non-employed Apprenticeship students – the learning provider is responsible for ensuring that non-employed apprentices have reasonable expenses met in full where they are needed to overcome barriers to learning. These may include the costs of travelling to or from the place of learning or work placement. Please contact your learning provider for more information.

Various voluntary and community transport schemes operate within Worcestershire. They offer transport for residents who cannot use or find it difficult to access public transport services. However, they may be limited as to who they can provide transport for and when. For more information on what is available in your area visit our community transport web pages:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/communitytransport>.

Schools and colleges may also offer their own transport arrangements. For up to date information, prices and application forms contact the school or college directly.

Are To Learn Scheme Assistance for young parents below the age of 20 with childcare costs, may also assist with transport costs. For more information and an application pack contact the support line 0800 121 8989.

Voluntary and Community Transport may also offer transport arrangements, however this may be limited in availability and certain areas of the county.

Vacant Seat Payment Scheme - Contracted vehicles to some schools may have spare capacity available for students to purchase under the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme. Seats will only be offered if available. Please see our website for current prices and to access the online Application Form www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooltransport.

3. What times during the day can learners use their travel pass?

Students who have been issued a Seven Card pass will be able to use their pass 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Passes issued for a seat on a contracted vehicle are limited to the one morning and one afternoon journey to and from school/college during term time.

Passes purchased outside the Worcestershire County Council scheme directly from public service operators, schools, and colleges may have different arrangements, and they should be contacted directly for more information.

For disabled learners and those with learning difficulties, passes issued under the Disabled Persons Concessionary bus pass scheme can be used at any time of the day, any day of the week, if the journey starts or ends in Worcestershire.

4. Please confirm that support will continue to be made available to learners who reach 19 whilst continuing on a course.

Students who reach the age of 20 whilst continuing a course remain eligible until the end of the

academic year for transport support.

For students above this age, colleges and public service operators may offer their own tickets and they should be contacted directly for more information. Pupils attending the colleges supporting the Seve7n Card Scheme will still be able to apply for a Seve7n Card.

Different rules apply to learners with learning difficulties and disabilities – in this case students will be offered support on continuing courses to the age of 25 providing they began studying the course before their 19th birthday.

5. How will learners be assessed to see if they are eligible for support? e.g. means-testing or must they be on benefits?

The Authority does not assess applications based on means-testing. All students regardless of circumstance are required to pay the standard contribution. Schools and Colleges offer support that may be means-tested and they should be contacted directly for more information regarding the Student Bursary Scheme.

Students who are rejected for transport assistance may appeal the decision under the corporate appeal procedure.

6. What help do you provide for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those over 19 or learners facing other difficulties in following their courses?

For more information regarding assistance offered please see section 1.

For information regarding the Disabled Person's Concessionary Bus Pass please see section 2.

7. Do you provide mobility/independence training for learners who face difficulty with transport?

Independent travel training is offered at some schools and colleges across the county please contact the education provider directly to see what is available.

8. When should learners start to apply for transport support?

Applications for a Disabled Person's Concessionary Bus Pass should be made through your local contact centre or contact the Worcestershire Hub 01905 765765 or visit our Concessionary Travel web pages: <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/concessionaryfares>

To apply for transport directly from the local bus company, or using transport arranged by your school

or college, contact them directly.

Application forms for the Seve7n Card or the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme can be made at any time from the website www.worcestershire.gov.uk/SchoolTransport

Please be aware that it can take up to 20 working days for a pass to be issued during the busy period.

9. What help can learners apply for if they need to travel to a course that is beyond your Local Authority area?

If the nearest learning provider is in another local authority area then student will still qualify for assistance. Students using schemes operated by schools or colleges, or buying a public service pass directly from the operator or via the college, should contact them directly for details of what transport support they offer or valid areas for tickets to be used.

10. What help is available for learners who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to stay away?

Transport support may be available if there are special reasons why it should be necessary to attend a learning establishment further away from home. For eligible students we will offer transport assistance to travel between your home address and your accommodation on a half termly basis providing you meet the general eligibility criteria outline in section 1.

Residential bursaries are available and colleges may also offer support to learners with daily travel costs. Applications should be made via the college. The Residential Support Scheme provides financial support with accommodation costs for learners (aged 16 and over) who need to live away from home to study because their course is not available locally. For more information visit www.direct.gov.uk helpline on 0800 121 8989.

11. Please provide information about all points of contact for learners seeking transport support, e.g. Local Authority/college, bus company contact. Please include any websites and e-mail addresses.

Please see section 2 for contact details for public bus service operators.

For more information on any aspect of transport within Worcestershire, please contact the Education Travel Team by completing a General Enquiry Form via our website.

Application forms are available from our website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooltransport.

If you wish to appeal a decision or make a complaint with regards to the Council's decision-making process in regards to transport, please follow the following links to the relevant pages on the website:

Appealing the decision made by transport:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20045/school_and_college_travel/1827/appeal_the_schoolcollege_transport_decision

Making a complaint about how your application has been handled by transport:

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20003/council/924/worcestershire_county_council_needs_your_input