

Transport policy statement for students in further education
aged 16-18 in further education and continuing students aged 19
and over

Name of Local Authority: Devon County Council
**Department Responsible: Children and Young People's
Services**

1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives

The County Council considers that the most effective way of meeting need is by extending its transport network to include post-16 establishments and to offer transport to eligible students in return for a contribution (normally from parents) towards the cost of this transport.

The County Council recently completed a major review of home to school and college transport, through which eligibility criteria and application processes have been simplified to the benefit of students. The new policy is to be implemented from September 2008 and includes changes to the 16+ policy.

There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school or college transport once a student is over 16. However, the local authority has agreed to assist with travel expenses in certain circumstances.

The Transport Partnership has begun to engage with the 14-19 agenda through the 14-19 coordinators. At present the funding cannot be used for this age group but the Partnership has agreed to carry out a pilot study in the south of the county, where the first diploma lines necessitating transport are likely to be put in place. The transport pilot will effectively mirror the 14-19 learning pilot.

Initially an audit of provision is being carried out to identify need. The Partnership is funding this work and will also be able to fund the 16+ portion of any transport provided. The pilot study will be useful in measuring increased participation and in preparing for the introduction of diplomas. Officers in the Transport Coordination Service (TCS) are working closely with 14-19 coordinators, transport providers and with schools and colleges.

The following is a summary of eligibility:

Eligibility criteria

In order to qualify for assistance a student must satisfy the following criteria:

- The student must be resident in Devon and attending a full time course of education, defined as 16 hours or more of supervised study. Students resident in the Unitary Councils of Plymouth and Torbay should apply directly to their home authorities.
- The student must be under nineteen years of age on 31 August immediately preceding the start of the academic year (see exception for students with Special Educational needs).
- Students must attend their nearest or designated establishment (see 3 below).
- The journey from home to school or college must be three miles or more, measured by the shortest available pedestrian route.

Students who are ineligible under these criteria may apply for concessionary places on contract coaches in the same way as students of compulsory school age. They may also apply to their college for financial support.

Designated establishments

There are two main types of establishment serving students who are over compulsory school age: Sixth Forms and Further Education (FE) Colleges. These are defined as follows:

- Where the school serving the home address has a sixth form, this school is the designated establishment.
- Where there is no sixth form serving the area, another sixth form or an FE college is the designated establishment, whichever is the nearer to the home address.
- If a student intends to follow an entirely vocational post 16 course and this is not available at the designated sixth form, then they will be eligible for transport to their designated FE college.
- An exception may be made where a student has to attend a particular establishment, since it is the nearest school or college where a qualification essential to the student's future career choice may be obtained. Students will be required to produce evidence of this validated by a college or university.

Charges

The level of contribution is set by the County Council and reviewed annually. The contribution is waived for low-income families, defined as those in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit or benefits which would have entitled them to free school meals. This is reviewed annually.

Other important points

- Assistance with travelling expenses is available for one inward and outward journey to/from school/college at the beginning and end of the official day.
- Students must agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Behaviour on vehicles and parents and pupils must both sign the Code before a ticket can be issued.
- Transport is only provided from and to the nearest pick up point for public or contract transport.
- Assistance is not provided to establishments beyond reasonable daily travelling distance. A reasonable distance is defined as less than 75 minutes, where the majority of the journey may be taken on existing contract routes and/or public transport.
- Students who move outside the area served by the local authority part way through their course must apply to their new local authority for assistance.
- Transport cannot be provided for induction or taster days or work experience.
- Transport is not provided for weekly or termly travel where a student lives away from home in order to study at an establishment beyond daily travelling distance. Exceptions may be made for students with special educational needs.

Post-16 students with special educational needs

The transport needs of post-16 students with special educational needs will be considered during the transitional planning process undertaken during years 10 and 11. The local authority would expect to be consulted in the transitional planning process with regard to transport provision and parents are strongly advised to contact the local

authority to confirm that this has taken place. The following main points apply:

- Where students have been placed at special schools or units by the local authority, transport assistance will be provided in the same way as for pupils of statutory school age.
- The eligibility criteria, as detailed in 2 and 3 above, will apply.
- Unless the student cannot walk to school or college, accompanied as necessary because of his or her disability, transport will not be automatically provided.
- Parents will need to submit an application form unless students are continuing to attend their special school.
- An exception to the upper age limit may be made where a student has been studying a specific course for those with learning difficulties and is required to attend beyond 19 in order to complete the course. Support would then continue only until the end of the next academic year following the student's twenty-first birthday, provided that they remain on the same course at the same college.
- Payment of the required contribution applies equally to students with special educational needs.

2. Please provide details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for students aged 16-19 and who provides them. Please provide details of any costs to the student.

Devon County Council has done a great deal of work to promote the expansion of smart card technology to enable greater flexibility in journey scheduling. This is detailed in 3 below.

Students who are not eligible for assistance may apply for concessionary places on existing transport in the same way as students of compulsory school age.

The level of contribution is set by the County Council and reviewed annually. For 2008/9 it remains at £270 (£240 if paid in advance). The contribution is waived for low-income families, defined as those in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit or benefits which would have entitled them to free school meals. This is reviewed annually.

In addition individual FE institutions may provide assistance. Students will often be asked for proof of refusal by the County Council before the college will agree to assist.–

Exeter College –

Exeter college provides assistance with transport to students who are not eligible for assistance from the Local Authority but does not cover the full cost of transport. A contribution of £280 was required for 2007/8 and this is reviewed annually.

It may be possible for a student whose family is on a low income or in receipt of benefits to obtain assistance from the College Learner Support Fund. The Learner Support Fund is administered by Michele Tear, Student Welfare Officer, 01392 205526. Assistance is provided in the form of a season ticket for use on public transport.

North Devon College –

North Devon College operate a scheme for students not entitled to assistance from the Local Authority. The terms offered for new students are the same as those offered by

the Local Authority.

North Devon College operates a scheme for students who are not entitled through the DCC scheme and are on a means tested benefit.

East Devon College –

East Devon College operate a scheme for students not entitled to assistance from the Local Authority. The terms offered for new students are the same as those offered by the Local Authority.

Students from Somerset are automatically concessionary students and the college scheme operates for them in the same way as for Devon students.

Bicton College –

Bicton College is in the process of setting up a non entitled scheme with DCC's Transport Co-ordination Service.

South Devon College-

Anyone not entitled to assistance from Devon County Council can contact South Devon College directly on 08000 380123. Students will be provided with a pass which entitles them to the same opportunities for travel that the concessionary scheme does. There is a contribution of £290 for the academic year which begins in September 2008.

City College Plymouth –

City College Plymouth offers a subsidised travel pass to all students including 16-19 year olds on the 6 Contract Buses from Liskeard, Looe, Launceston, Tavistock, Ivybridge and Kingsbridge. Cost to the student for 2008 / 09 is £210 per year or £3.50 per return journey for casual usage – applications can be made direct to the Student Funding Team by contacting 01752 305381.

In conjunction with Plymouth City Council, Plymouth students aged between 16-19 studying full-time can receive a Young Person's Travel Pass which allows the student to travel at a reduced cost of 60p per journey.

All students including 16-19 year olds can travel FREE of charge on the No 36 between College sites and Plymouth City Centre.

All students can request travel support when applying for Learner Support Funds. The students are required to meet the hardship criteria set by the College and individual travel needs will be assessed.

3. What times during the day can students use their travel pass or obtain concessionary fares?

Students who travel on contract bus routes or who are transported by taxi with other students have no choice as to the time they may travel on outward or return journeys. Some multi-journey discount schemes offered by public transport operators also have

restrictions on travel.

In 2007/08 smartcards have been issued to students attending North Devon College and Bideford and Ilfracombe Sixth Forms. The usual criteria and payments apply. These smart cards have the added benefit of free travel on all local bus services during college holidays, all day Saturday and Sunday and after 6pm on college days. It is intended that this service should be extended to other areas of Devon in due course. The 16+ Partnership have agreed to fund some of the continuing costs of this initiative.

Exeter College –

For students with season tickets transport operators will allow return travel up until 9.30pm.

North Devon College –

Benefits available as for smart cards.

East Devon College -

If students have a travel pass for a public bus they can use it at any time the bus travels from their stop to the college and back. Students with passes for contract vehicles are restricted to one journey for am and one for pm.

All passes are only valid during term time and do not entitle students to discounts at any other time of year.

Bicton College

(Information available directly from the college)

South Devon College-

During a college day students can use tickets for return travel up to 9:30pm.

City College Plymouth –

The College Contract Buses operates one journey in the morning and one journey in the evening per day from Liskeard, Launceston, Looe, Tavistock, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge. Full timetable details are available from City College Plymouth Student Funding Team on 01752 305381.

Students aged 16-19 can pay reduced fare by using their Young Person's Travel Pass before 9am and between 3.00pm and 6.00pm weekdays. Travel at other times will be charged at child rate of fare.

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

Students must be under nineteen years of age on 31 August immediately preceding the start of the academic year. An exception to the upper age limit may be made where a student has been studying a specific course for those with learning difficulties and is required to attend beyond 19 in order to complete the course. Support would then

continue only until the end of the academic year following the student's twenty-first birthday, provided that they remain on the same course at the same college.

Exeter College –

Help for over 19 students may be available through the College Learner Support Fund.

North Devon College –

Transport is run academic year to academic year so students who reach 19 before the start of the academic year/course (i.e. September) will have their transport organised on the college's concessionary transport scheme.

Those who reach 19 after September having already started their course will continue to have their transport organised by Devon County Council for that year – if they still have another year on their course, their transport will then be organised by North Devon College.

East Devon College –

Transport is run academic year to academic year so students who reach 19 before the start of the academic year/course (i.e. September) will have their transport organised on the college's concessionary transport scheme.

Those who reach 19 after September having already started their course will continue to have their transport organised by Devon County Council for that year – if they still have another year on their course, their transport will then be organised by East Devon College.

Bicton College –

(Information available directly from the college)

South Devon College-

Transport assistance may be available from the college for full time students. Please contact the college on 08000 380123.

City College Plymouth –

If the student turns 19 whilst in their year of study they can continue to receive their subsidised Contract Bus Travel and use their Young Person's Travel Pass where appropriate. If they were under 19 at the start of the course they can still apply to receive a Young Person's Travel Pass after their 19th birthday.

Students can apply for Learner Support Funds at any age. Consideration is given relating to their circumstances.

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

Where help is given, the County Council pays most of the cost, but the student's parents are asked to make a contribution. For 2008/9 this has been set at £270. Facilities are available to pay termly or by monthly direct debit. If the whole sum is paid in advance the cost is reduced to £240.

The contribution is waived for low-income families, defined as those in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit or benefits which would have entitled them to free school meals.

Exeter College –

Transport assistance via the Exeter College Scheme is only available to students who have been refused help from the Local Authority (a letter confirming that they are refused help is required).

Students also have to live more than three miles from College, studying a full time course (more than 16 hours a week) and be under 19 years of age on the 1 September 2008.

A contribution is required from the student before a pass can be issued. Students from families on a low income or in receipt of benefits may be eligible for help to pay for their pass from the College Learner Support.

North Devon College –

Transport assistance via the North Devon College Scheme is only available to students who have been refused help from the Local Authority (a letter confirming that they are refused help is required).

For full support, students or their families must be on a means tested benefit.

East Devon College –

Transport assistance via the North Devon College Scheme is only available to students who have been refused help from the Local Authority (a letter confirming that they are refused help is required).

For full support, students or their families must be on a means tested benefit.

Bicton College –

(Information available directly from the college)

South Devon College-

A contribution of £290 is required for the pass to be issued. The College is currently developing opportunities to allow payment to be made on a termly or monthly basis. Please contact 08000 380123 for further information.

There may be assistance available from the College for families with low income or in receipt of certain means-tested benefits.

City College Plymouth –

Students applying for the College Contract Bus are not means tested.

Students applying for the Young Person's Travel Pass are required to live in the Plymouth Council Tax area and study full-time. There is no financial assessment for

this pass – it is supported by Plymouth City Council.

Students are subject to a hardship assessment as detailed in the College Learner Support Fund Policy when requesting exceptional support for travel costs. This fund is available to those students who are on the lowest incomes.

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

DCC considers the transport needs of post-16 students with special educational needs during the transitional planning process undertaken during years 10 and 11. The local authority would expect to be consulted in the transitional planning process with regard to transport provision and parents are strongly advised to contact the local authority to confirm that this has taken place. The following main points apply:

- Where students have been placed at special schools or units by the local authority, transport assistance will be provided in the same way as for pupils of statutory school age.
- The eligibility criteria, as detailed in 2 and 3 above, will apply.
- Unless the student cannot walk to school or college, accompanied as necessary because of his or her disability, transport will not be automatically provided.
- Parents will need to submit an application form unless students are continuing to attend their special school.
- Additional assistance may be available, such as the provision of escorts, in cases where the student's needs require it. Modified vehicles may also be used to facilitate college or special school attendance.

Exeter College -

The same rules apply regarding eligibility for assistance with travel for students with Special Educational Needs and/or with disabilities.

North Devon College –

The college can support a student with disabilities up to £450, to allow them to use their own transport. This support is means tested.

East Devon College –

The college can support a student with disabilities up to £450, to allow them to use their own transport. This support is means tested.

Bicton College –

(Information available directly from the college)

South Devon College-

The same criteria apply regarding eligibility for assistance with travel for students with learning difficulties and /or disabilities.

City College Plymouth –

Transport for students with disabilities is arranged by Plymouth City Council in most instances dependant upon where the student lives. In some cases the travel is arranged by Devon County Council and Cornwall County Council given the location of City College Plymouth. The contact for students on the College Skills Development course is Wendy Round. The contact for students with disability issues is Abi Gee.

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

The local authority has carried out an Independent Travel Training pilot with one of its special schools. This has been very successful in improving not only independence on the way to school but also in developing communication skills and confidence. This work is carried out in partnership with Adult and Community Services, thus giving continuity for young people at the point of transition to adult services. The Transport Partnership has agreed to support the expansion of this initiative and two trainers are to be appointed.

Walking escorts are being introduced for older special school pupils who live within the statutory walking distance and could walk to school but whose parents or carers are unable to accompany them. This will benefit some 16+ students and fits well with the authority's sustainability agenda and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

The Buddy Scheme is being supported at colleges, for students who can use public transport with some degree of assistance from fellow students.

All of these are recognised as a priority in developing independence and confidence.

Some FE colleges also operate assistance schemes, such as the Buddy scheme, and mobility training may be provided as part of some special courses for students with learning difficulties. Details can be obtained from individual colleges.

City College Plymouth –

City College Plymouth offers mobility and independence training as an integral part of the Skills Development courses for 16-19 aged students and students over 19. More information is available from Wendy Round – Skills Development Programme Area Manager.

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

DCC -

For students renewing their applications, forms are sent directly to them during the Spring term.

For new students, application packs are sent to all Year 11 students via their Devon school in March or April. These should be completed and returned as soon as possible, and by 1 June 2008 at the latest.

Exeter College –

Application forms for the College Travel scheme are available from May/June.

Returning students are forwarded renewal forms during June. Applications need to be received by the College by mid August to ensure that a travel pass will be available for the beginning of the Autumn term.

North Devon College –

Ideally as early as possible. Currently students apply in May or as soon as they have been turned down by the Local Authority.

East Devon College -

Ideally as early as possible. Currently students apply in May or as soon as they have been turned down by the Local Authority.

Bicton College –

(Information available directly from the college)

Duchy College –

Duchy College serves a wide area and offers specialist course. Transport to the college is jointly organised by DCC and the college. Students must complete the DCC form and also advise the college that they require transport

South Devon College-

Information is available at interview. Devon students should apply to the Council by the end of June and as soon as the student receives notice of non entitlement they can contact the College on 08000 380123. Passes will be available from the start of the academic year, in September 2008.

City College Plymouth –

Young Person's Travel Pass applications are available from June 2008 from schools, colleges and Plymouth City Council. Students accepted at City College Plymouth will be sent a Travel Application pack in July 2008 to ensure they have received a YPTP application.

Application forms for the Contract Bus will be sent to students together with a copy of the Travel Policy in July 2008.

Application forms for Learner Support Funds for exceptional travel costs will be available from August 2008.

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

Where the designated establishment is outside the county boundary in a neighbouring authority, generally because it is the closest, transport assistance is provided subject to the usual criteria.

While the County Council does not provide assistance with transport beyond the normal maximum travelling distance (defined as a public transport journey of more than 75 minutes), policy does allow for some students to attend post-16 provision outside the LA where there are sound educational reasons for doing so, e.g. students with

special educational needs.

Some restrictions (such as the travelling distance) may be waived for students with special educational needs.

Exeter College –

At present if any additional help is required with travelling to and from College (wherever the venue may be), help may be available from the Learner Support Fund.

North Devon College –

If any additional help is required with travelling to and from College, help may be available from a central support fund.

East Devon College –

If any additional help is required with travelling to and from College, help may be available from a central support fund.

Bicton College –

(Information available directly from the college)

South Devon College-

There may be additional support available from the College's bursary scheme for anyone travelling from outside the local authority boundary. Please contact 08000 380123 for further information.

City College Plymouth –

Please contact City College Plymouth to discuss your needs.

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

The County Council does not normally assist with board and lodging costs.

Exeter College –

At present the College does not have any students in this situation, so no policy is in place to cover this. If additional help were required by students in this situation, they would need to apply to the Learner Support Fund.

North Devon College –

Not applicable

East Devon College –

Students who travel in from remote places/long distances can enquire about accommodation in the area; the college has an accommodations officer with a register of properties.

Bicton College –

(Information available directly from the college)

South Devon College-

Not applicable at this time.

City College Plymouth –

City College Plymouth can advise on the Learning and Skills Council Residential Bursary which helps students in this situation travelling to City College Plymouth. Please contact the Student Funding Team on 01752 305381.

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

For information on transport provided by Devon County Council students should contact My Devon on 0845 1551019

For information on all available public transport students should contact:

Traveline on 0871 200 2233

www.traveline.org.uk

Exeter College:

Emma Milburn, Travel Scheme Administrator

Telephone: (01392) 205319

e-mail: emmamilburn@exe-coll.ac.uk

website: www.exe-coll.ac.uk

North Devon College:

Ellen Heafiel

Telephone: (01271) 338125

e-mail: ehaeffel@ndevon.ac.uk

website: www.ndevon.ac.uk

East Devon College:

Clare Howarth

Telephone: (01884) 235233

email: chowarth@admin.eastdevon.ac.uk

website: www.eastdevon.ac.uk

Bicton College:

Eleanor Murphy

Telephone: (01395) 562300

e-mail: ewmurphy@bicton.ac.uk

website: www.bicton.ac.uk

South Devon College:

Alex Howarth

Telephone: (01803) 540505

e-mail: alex.howarth@southdevon.ac.uk

website: www.southdevon.ac.uk

Other useful contacts –

Somerset County Council: (01823) 355942

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