

## **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 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 2015/16.

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 due to their special educational needs and/or disability they cannot be transported to school safely
- 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's' 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

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. Our aim is to ensure that as many students as possible develop the life skills and self-confidence to travel independently and to ensure that this is supported through the forms of travel assistance provided.

### **Academic Year 2015/16**

Brighton & Hove City Council's Children's Services, in partnership with our neighbouring local authorities, schools, colleges and transport providers, aims to ensure that learners in the city are not prevented from studying by the financial cost of travel, nor by the length or difficulty of their journey.

The arrangements outlined in Part One below apply to all students aged 16 to 19. Additional travel assistance from Brighton & Hove City Council may be offered to individual students with low incomes who meet the eligibility criteria set out in section 5 below. This policy statement applies to young people studying in schools, colleges or other mainstream Further Education providers.

The arrangements to consider travel assistance for students with learning difficulties or disabilities are described in Part Two. Where they are eligible, these students may also access the arrangements for travel assistance described in Part One.

## Part One: 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 all 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 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 here: <http://www.buses.co.uk/tickets/busid.aspx>

### 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 can allow 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. This discount is currently (May 2015) being renegotiated for 2015/16. 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.

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. Information will also be posted on the City Council website (see below).

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 here:

<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.

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

### Travel Assistance for students with low income

Schools and colleges offering 16 – 19 education and training receive 16 – 19 Bursary Fund grant from the government. The purpose of the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund is to address specific barriers to participation faced by individual students, and may include payment for transport. Individual schools

and colleges have their own policies which prescribe how they use bursary funds. Students should discuss with their school or college student support service whether they may be eligible for assistance with transport costs from the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund.

The council will consider offering some additional direct financial help towards travel costs for young people with low incomes in exceptional circumstances. In order to qualify for help with travel costs under the council's policy:

- Students must be living in the area of Brighton and Hove City Council when their course starts
- They 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.
- They must be aged under 19 on 31 August before their course starts. 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;
- 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 **where the household income is £16,190 or less**

Universal Credit

- The journey to school or college must be over 3 miles (by the shortest walking route) from the home
- Assistance is not given for attendance at private schools or colleges
- 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
- If students want to attend a school or college outside Brighton & Hove, they would be eligible for assistance only in cases where they have learning difficulties or disabilities and there is no course appropriate to their needs in Brighton & Hove

Support is available only to students who are under the age of 19 when their course begins. Exceptions can be considered in the case of students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Please note that **Bus ID** cards are valid only up to the August after a student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Application forms for travel assistance (PS1 Forms) will be available from the start of the summer term. Forms can be obtained from Brighton & Hove schools and colleges or from the Council direct (see below).

## **Part Two: Travel assistance for students with learning difficulties or disabilities**

The council's policy for children of compulsory school age is to support as many of them as possible to learn independent travel skills. It is therefore expected that many students with learning difficulties or disabilities will have learned these skills and should normally be able to continue to travel independently when they move on to sixth form or college. Some young people with learning difficulties or disabilities may need further training to develop their confidence in using new routes in new circumstances.

Like other students, those with learning difficulties or disabilities should discuss with their school or college the assistance with travel which may be available from the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund.

The council supports independent travel training provided by the council's own maintained special secondary schools. We have also supported similar programmes at Sussex Downs College and we are seeking to extend this support to other colleges.

The council recognises that some 16 – 25 students with learning difficulties or disabilities 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 in these circumstances parents or carers should be responsible for making travel arrangements. We also recognise that this will not always be possible for a range of reasons relating to the parent, carer or family circumstances or to the circumstances of the young people themselves.

In exceptional cases, students with learning difficulties or disabilities or their parents or carers may apply for travel assistance using Form PS1 which can be provided by the Council's SEN Team. An additional form giving an opportunity to provide supplementary information for the Transport Panel to take into account is also available. Each case will be considered individually by the council's Transport Panel, taking into account information provided about the student's learning difficulties or disabilities, whether similar provision is available in a nearer school or college, the length or complexity of the journey and whether parents or carers could reasonably be expected to provide transport themselves.

The panel will decide the form of travel assistance to be offered, including whether this should include independent travel training, taking into account the availability of this training. Where necessary or appropriate, the panel will seek specialist advice, for example from Special Needs Advisors or other professionals working with the student.

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.

We will not normally offer support for journeys from home to college that exceed 15 miles or one and a quarter hours' travelling time. We would expect cases where a learner needs to attend an institution beyond daily travelling distance to be rare and, where they do occur, to be considered on an individual basis by the council and the institution involved. The council does not have a budget to help with residential costs.

Any applicant who is unhappy with the panel's decision may write to the Home to School Transport Team at the address at the end of this policy, asking for the decision to be reviewed and setting out the reasons why. The decision will be reviewed by a senior officer of the council who will reply in writing. Should the applicant still be dissatisfied with the decision a further appeal may be made to a panel of three officers not involved in the original decision, whose decision is final. Failure to provide home to school/college transport does not constitute a ground for appeal to the First Tier SEND Tribunal.

Students, parents or carers have 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/appeals process must be completed before making a referral to the LGO.

## **Further Information**

PS1 Applications for travel assistance are available from individual local school sixth forms, further education and sixth form colleges or from the City Council at:

Room 310  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
King's House  
Grand Avenue  
HOVE BN3 2SU

tel: **(01273) 290525**

email: **[bryan.deakin@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:bryan.deakin@brighton-hove.gov.uk)**

You can also check the Brighton & Hove City Council website for information at **[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk)**.

To access the student support pages, click the link below. This information will be updated regularly.  
<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/student-support-student-grants-loans/help-travel-and-living-costs-fe>

National information about post 16 transport is also available from the government here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/help-home-school-transport>

NUS card holders can obtain further discounts here:  
<http://www.nus.org.uk/en/nus-extra/>