

Somerset County Council Travel Policy Statement 2018/19 for learners aged 16-19 in Further education and Training, and continuing learners aged 19 -25

Introduction

Beyond the end of Year 11, Somerset County Council does not have a statutory duty to provide home to school/college transport free of charge for students age 16 to 19. However, in order to promote access to education and opportunities for all young people in the County, Somerset County Council will provide subsidised transport for students aged between 16 and 19 to access Post 16 education at a school sixth form, further education establishment or a Local Authority commissioned learning provider.

Somerset County Council, in consultation with stakeholders and other partnerships work together to, ensure that the individual needs of young people are paramount whilst balancing equality of access to education and training opportunities with value for money by:

- Developing a collective strategy relating to post 16 school/college travel assistance within the context of Government, EFA (Education Funding Agency) and Somerset County Council strategies
- Identifying gaps in travel provision and filling those gaps to improve accessibility to education and to maximise choice of learning venue.
- Improving travel information for all young people and adult learners
- Discussing priorities with local education and training providers
- Focusing on improving travel for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by providing subsidised specialised travel assistance where needed or through the Somerset Independent Travel Training Scheme in order to increase the independence for this group of learners
- Improving travel links in deeply rural areas by maintaining the provision of demand responsive travel schemes and affordable access to learning for young people, improving their employment opportunities and reducing social exclusion
- Ensuring travel provision removes barriers to learning and training for those from vulnerable groups and/or those most likely not to be in education, employment or training.

Concessionary Fare Detail

Somerset County Council - the Local Authority (LA)- offer a 'student 'Love the Bus County Ticket' to enable young people to attend the learning/training centre of their choice provided applicants meet the Somerset County Council eligibility criteria of:-

- Being over the statutory school leaving age of 16 on 01 September 2018
- Attending a course of further education or training compliant with legislation relating to the raising of the participation age

A Love the Bus County Ticket will cost £795 this year. There is a direct debit option to enable students to spread the payment over the year. The electronic ticket is interoperable which means it is available for use across the public transport network in Somerset.

In addition most Bus Operators offer a range of daily, termly and season tickets at a discounted rate. Details can be found at the end of this document or on operator websites also listed later in this document

Additional arrangements by Colleges

Bridgwater & Taunton College

For the 2018/19 academic year students who live over 2 miles from their main campus can apply to the 16-19 Bursary for help towards the cost of the County Ticket. The amount of help will be dependent on gross household income as follows:

Income £0 - £25,000 up to £500

Income £25,001 - £35,000 up to £400

Income £35,001 - £50,000 up to £300

The 16-19 Bursary is limited therefore early application is advised. Payments will be made in 3 instalments, one at the beginning of November, one at the beginning of February and one at the beginning of April. Students who choose to purchase weekly or monthly tickets directly from the bus operators can also benefit from support in relation to the cost of the County Ticket but will need to provide proof of purchases throughout the academic year.

The College operated services into their Bridgwater Campus from Weston, Portishead, Clevedon,

Wiveliscombe, Castle Cary, Shepton Mallet, Tiverton and Yeovil will be £390.

For further details and applications for bursaries, please contact Bridgwater & Taunton College by e-mail studentsupport@btc.ac.uk

Richard Huish College

For the 2018/19 academic year Richard Huish College will be offering Students £100 towards the cost of the 'Love the Bus' County Ticket, as long as the students are in receipt of the ticket on the 2nd November.

Students eligible for the College Discretionary Bursary do not receive the £100 but will receive £500 towards the cost of the County Ticket if eligibility criteria for the bursary are met.

Strode College

For the 2018/2019 academic year, students can apply to the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund for financial assistance towards the cost of the County Ticket bus pass.

- Students with a gross household income of below £26,000 will be eligible for £575 towards the cost of the County Ticket. These students also have the opportunity to apply for help from the 16-19 Bursary Fund towards essential course costs.
- Students with a gross household income of between £26,001 and £35,000 will be eligible for £375 towards the cost of the County Ticket.
- Students with a gross household income of between £35,001 and £50,000 will be eligible for £175 towards the cost of the County Ticket.

Strode College also makes additional arrangements for transport by providing an annual contribution of £70,000 to Somerset County Council to provide bus services to the College.

Yeovil College Discretionary Bursary Support Funds

Eligibility

These are awarded to:

Students aged 16-19 who can provide evidence of household income below £30,000 will be provided with free transport to and from college, either by receiving 100% of the value of the County Ticket or free travel on the College buses YC1 and YC2. Where a student provides evidence that there is no suitable/feasible bus route enabling them to access the college, the college may in some circumstances provide alternative assistance through a cash travel allowance.

Evidence of household income must be submitted with the application to enable an assessment to be made.

Students aged 16-19 who live more than 3 miles from Yeovil College and who are applying for a County Ticket for their transport costs, must submit the application form for the Somerset County Ticket via Somerset County Council's website.

Funds are available to support transport, equipment, uniform and any other course related costs with which the student may need assistance, as long as eligibility criteria is met. Assistance is assessed on an individual basis.

Assessment for support

There is currently no means testing for assistance with travel costs and the student contribution to the cost of their ticket is the same for all. However, those suffering financial hardship or personal problems can access additional assistance through the 16-19 Bursary (which is means tested) provided by Colleges and Schools with Sixth Forms and other Post 16 providers of Education and Training

Students who have recently left 'care' may be eligible to have their contribution to travel waived.

Petrol allowances are available at 18 pence per mile up to a limit of £135.00 per annum to allow young people living more than three miles from their nearest bus stop to gain access to and from the local bus network.

Currently, where space is available on the contracted School Transport fleet; students may also apply for a Love the Bus County Ticket for these routes, Students can use these tickets to access the public network at other times.

Post 16 students attending Diploma courses, Foundation Learning and apprenticeships can access both college/school-based provision and work placements by using the Love the Bus County Ticket.

Travel assistance to academies will be on the same basis as for local authority schools with sixth forms (i.e. free pre 16 for those that qualify and Love the Bus County Ticket for post 16 students).

Currently no form of means testing is applied to the Love the Bus County Ticket or petrol allowances given to students living more than 3 miles from a bus stop.

The Love the Bus County Ticket entitles the holder to travel throughout Somerset and on cross border routes to and from Wiltshire, Dorset and Devon North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset.

Unless stated otherwise, students may use these flexible tickets to travel at any time of the day, evenings, on weekends and during vacations. Full details of operators providing unrestricted and restricted Love the Bus County Ticket services can be found on the application form and at the end of this document

Special Educational Needs

All eligible students will have to pay a contribution of £795 for the 2018/19. academic year.

In addition to the Love the Bus County Ticket, Somerset County Council may provide a subsidised specialist travel service where it assesses that the

proposed course is appropriate and special travel arrangements are necessary in order for the student to access the course.

Travel assistance is provided via the most cost-effective method. Suitable travel arrangements can include:

- A bus or train pass
- A seat on a minibus
- A seat in a taxi
- A fuel allowance or a personal travel payment (in exceptional circumstances only where it is not possible for the Council to provide subsidised travel to an eligible student).

Travel assistance is for one return journey from a designated pick up point (not necessarily the home address) to the school/establishment during standard academic terms only and at the official start and end of the College day. Travel assistance cannot be provided to meet a student's individual timetable.

Where the course the student is studying is on a split site, assistance will only be provided to the main qualifying campus.

If an establishment is named in a student's Education Health and Care Plan it does not necessarily mean travel assistance will be provided by the LA.

When the LA receives an application for travel assistance to the relevant establishment, we will consider the following information:-

- Whether the student is a Somerset resident;
- The age and needs of the student;
- The length of the journey in relation to the needs of the young person;
- Whether the student can use public service vehicles. Lack of public service vehicles in an area is not in itself a reason to provide individual transport;
- The benefit that the student will get from the course. Here the LA will take into account any previous post 16 education and must decide if the course will really make a difference to the life and future prospects of the student. Reports are requested from appropriately qualified and authorised officers and other relevant agencies in order to help the LA to make this decision;
- Whether the student is applying for transport to the relevant establishment. This means to their nearest college, 6th form college or school offering their chosen or a comparable course.
- The cost of the transport to be provided against any alternative means of facilitating attendance - e.g. could the student go into lodgings close to the college

- Be attending a full-time course (a minimum of 540 hours per year – approximately 14 hours per week – of supervised study across three academic terms.

Support for students who reach the age of 19 while continuing on a course

Travel assistance, where approved, will continue for the initial course of study until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes 19 years of age. However, assistance will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel encouraged.

Support for students aged 19-25

Applications for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged between 19 and 24 years of age for travel assistance will be considered on an individual basis for a first course of study.

An assessment will be made of the application taking account of this Travel Policy Statement, the particular circumstances of the applicant and the case for assistance with travel.

Where travel assistance is agreed, it will normally continue during the agreed course of study until the end of the academic year in which the students 25th birthday occurs. However, travel assistance will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel encouraged.

Application process

All applicants will need to complete an application for Travel assistance annually (for returning students) which can be found here:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=41829>

Each subsequent application will be assessed taking into account the student's progression on the course and their individual needs. The LA will take advice from the education establishment attended, social worker (if appropriate), qualified assessment officer and, where appropriate, other agencies.

It should not be assumed that assistance with travel assistance will automatically be provided each year. In some cases the LA may decide that a young person would benefit from a different type of setting to aid their development such as attendance at a Day Centre or employment within the Adult & Social Care Service rather than further education at a college or school.

Independent Travel Training Scheme

Somerset County Council employs Independent Travel Trainers who work with appropriate students to train them to travel independently. Students are trained in road safety awareness, using money for travel and safe independent travel. If the independent travel training has been successful the student will be required to purchase a Love the Bus County Ticket that will allow them to travel to and from School/College on all local bus services within Somerset, subject to individual bus operator restrictions. Please note refusal to participate in this scheme may result in travel assistance being withdrawn,

16-19 Bursary Fund

If you're aged between 16 and 19 years and think you might struggle with the costs for full-time education or training you can apply to your college for a bursary. The bursary scheme is made up of two elements.

1: A bursary of £1,200 per year if you are considered to be vulnerable; The definition of 'vulnerable' includes: those students who are in care or a care leaver; students in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit; those students receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and/ or in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP). If you qualify the bursary will be paid direct from your school or college.

2: A discretionary award if you are facing financial barriers This can include if you are having difficulty in meeting the costs of transport, meals, books and/or equipment. Your college or training provider is responsible for deciding who is eligible, how much to pay and how regularly it will be paid. The college or training provider will usually want to see evidence, for example a letter regarding your benefits.

If you have any concerns following the college's decision regarding your application for a bursary then please contact Transporting Somerset within the Local Authority

Discretionary Support Funds

Funding bodies give colleges money so that they can make hardship grants available to their students. These funds are aimed at helping disadvantaged students with the costs of further education, for example, because they have a low income or have a disability.

Each college has their own policy on who is eligible for funding and what they will provide grants for.

Grants can cover the cost of:

- childcare and related transport costs
- course related books and equipment
- transport to and from college
- course field trips
- examination fees.

Please contact your Student Support or Welfare Officer at the college for further information and help in applying.

Care to Learn Bursaries

The intention of Care to Learn (C2L) provides help for young parents (defined as those aged under 20) to continue in education after the birth of a child. It provides funding for childcare whilst the young parent is engaged in a study Programme and is not able to provide care for their child. C2L can also help with travel costs involved in taking the child to the childcare provider.

Appeals and Complaints Process

If a student is not happy with the service they receive they should contact Transporting Somerset (see the contact details below) and ask for details of the Somerset County Council Complaints procedure.

If a student wishes to appeal against a decision made by the Council concerning entitlement to transport assistance then Transporting Somerset will be able to offer advice and guidance about the review process.

Useful Contact Numbers for students with learning disabilities and/or other disabilities

Avalon School 01458 443081

Penrose School 01278 423660

Selworthy School 01823 284970

Bridgwater & Taunton College 01823 366366

Richard Huish College 01823 320800

Critchill School 01373 464148

Strode College 01458 844400

Yeovil College 01935 423921

Bridgwater & Taunton College 01278 441200

Cannington College 01278 441200

Norton Radstock College 01761 433161

Fairmead School 01935 421295

Fiveways School 01935 476227

Wiltshire College Trowbridge 01225 350035

Somerset County Council 0300 123 2224

When should learners start to apply for transport support?

As early as possible, preferably during the Spring or Summer terms prior to their start at college/sixth form/school in the following September. All students should apply before the 7 August to ensure that a Love the Bus County Ticket can be produced in time for the start of term. Applicants with learning disabilities and /or other disabilities should refer to the information provided above and apply before mid-June 2018.

What help is available to learners who need to travel to a course that is beyond the Somerset Local Authority area?

If the chosen course is unavailable in Somerset, or the 'out of county' college is the nearest college to the student's home that offers the course, or a similar suitable course, then, provided they meet the eligibility criteria, they will be offered a Love the Bus County Ticket. If there is no public transport available then a travel allowance will be offered up to a maximum of £135.00 per year.

What help is available for learners who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to lodge away from home?

Termly travel is offered i.e. one journey at the start of term and one journey at the end of term. Additional trips home must be facilitated and funded by parents.

Some students who need to live away from home in order to attend the course may apply for a 'Residential Bursary' and should enquire about this at the Further Education institution they will attend.

Information concerning all points of contact for learners seeking transport support (including website addresses).

Somerset County Council, Transporting Somerset, PPC302, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY.

www.somerset.gov.uk

Transport to 16+ schools and FE Colleges

Post 16 Transport Policy

<http://moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk>

Local Bus Services

Contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33 or <http://www.travelinesw.com>

Community Transport /Dial-Ride services/Student Bike Loans

<https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk> 0845 345 9155

Somerset Colleges and Schools with Sixth Forms (which may also offer assistance with transport and 16-19 Bursary funds):

Bridgwater & Taunton College 01278 455464,

Website: <http://www.bridgwater.ac.uk/>

Bridgwater & Taunton College (Taunton site) 01823 366366,

Website : www.bridgwater.ac.uk

Strode College 01458 844400,

Website: www.strode-college.ac.uk/

Richard Huish College 01823 320800,

Website : www.huish.ac.uk/

Yeovil College 01935 423921,

Website: www.yeovil.ac.uk/

The Space, Heathfield Community School 01823 414173
Website : www.thespacesomerset.co.uk/

The West Somerset Community College 01643 706061
Website: www.westsomersetcollege.org/

Holyrood Academy 01460 260100
Website <http://www.holyroodacademy.com/>

Wadham School 01460 270123
<http://www.wadhamschool.co.uk/>

Huish Episcopi Academy 01458 250501
Website : www.huishepiscopi.net/

Frome Community College 01373 465353
Website : www.fromecollege.somerset.sch.uk/

St Augustines 01225 350001
Website: www.st-augustines.wilts.sch.uk

The Blue School
Phone: 01749 678799
Website: www.theblueschoolwells.co.uk

The Kings of Wessex Academy
Phone: 01934 742608
Website: <http://www.kowessex.co.uk/>

King Alfred School
Phone: 01278 784881
Website: <http://www.kingalfred.somerset.sch.uk/>

Saint Gregory's Bath
Phone: 01225 832873
Website: www.st-gregorys.org.uk

The Taunton Academy
Phone: 01823 348200
Website: <http://www.thetauntonacademy.com/>

Somervale School
Phone: 01761 414276
Website: <http://www.somervaleschool.com/>
(Contracted Routes only)

Norton Hill Sixth Form
Phone 01761 402280
Website: <http://www.msnsixth.com>

Writhlington School
Phone: 01761 433581
Website: <http://www.writhlington.org.uk/>

Gryphon VC Comprehensive School
Phone: 01935 813122
Website: <http://www.gryphon.dorset.sch.uk/>

Neighbouring Colleges:

City of Bath College 01225 312191 Website: <http://www.bathcollege.ac.uk/>

Bicton College 01395 562400 Website : <https://www.bicton.ac.uk/>

Petroc (Tiverton Campus) 01884 235200 Website : <http://www.petroc.ac.uk>

Exeter College 01392 400500 Website : <http://www.exe-coll.ac.uk>

Bath College (Radstock) 01225 312191
Website: <https://www.bathcollege.ac.uk/>

Wiltshire College (Lackham) 01249 466873
Website : <http://www.wiltshire.ac.uk/lackham/>

Wiltshire College Trowbridge 01225 756264
Website : <http://www.wiltshire.ac.uk/trowbridge/>

Weston College 01934 411411
Website: <http://www.weston.ac.uk/>

Other Student Ticket Offers available for the 2018/19 Academic Year

The County Ticket may not be the most cost effective ticket for all students. Please find below details other tickets available from operators to either purchase in advance or on the bus, which may be more cost effective in certain circumstances. The list below is not comprehensive and we strongly advise you to contact the operator of the service you intend to use directly to check single, day return and any other season tickets they may be able to offer you. The contact details for all bus operators are listed on page 12 of this policy document

Buses of Somerset

A £25 five day ticket is available to purchase through the mTicket App on your mobile which allows travel on any five days (not consecutive) and is valid on

all Buses of Somerset services on the days the ticket is activated. For further details please contact the operator.

Hatch Green Coaches

On bus services 10C, 19, 23, 23B, 51, 613 and 624 a £5 day return student ticket will be available from 1 September 2018 on College days only. For all other Hatch Green bus services please contact the operator.

First West of England

- West of England Day Ticket for students £4.90 per day mTicket app or £5.30 paper ticket purchase.
- West of England Weekly Ticket for students £17.50 per week mTicket app or £18.90 paper ticket purchase
- West of England Monthly Ticket for Students £67.50 per month mTicket app or £72.50 paper ticket purchase
- West of England Yearly Ticket for students £735.00 per annum mTicket app or £794 paper ticket purchase

Students will need apply for a First Photo ID pass or be able to present their student photo ID when purchasing these tickets

South West Coaches

On bus services 646, 647,648, and 652 a £5 day return student ticket will be available from 1 September 2018 on College days only. For all other South West Coaches bus services please contact the operator.

Major Bus Operators in Somerset:

Berry's Coaches 01823 331356

<https://www.berryscoaches.co.uk/>

Peter Clifford House, Great Western Way, Taunton TA2 6BX

Damory Coaches 01202 338420

<https://www.damory.co.uk/>

Salisbury Road, Pimperne, Blandford DT11 8TU

First Somerset & Avon 0345 602 0121

<https://www.firstgroup.com/bristol-bath-and-west>

Enterprise House, Easton Rd, Bristol BS5 0DZ

Buses of Somerset 0345 6020121

<https://www.firstgroup.com/somerset>

Taunton Bus Station, Tower Street, TA1 4AF

Frome Minibuses 01373 471474
<http://s101282612.websitehome.co.uk/frome/>
George's Ground, Marston Trading Estate, Frome BA11 4RP

Hatch Green Coaches 01823 480338
<https://hatchgreencoaches.co.uk/>
Hatch Green Garage, Hatch Beauchamp, TA3 6TN

Libra Travel 01373 812255
<http://www.libratravelltd.com/>
Buckland Down Cottage, Buckland Down, Buckland Dinham
Frome BA11 2RG

Ridlers Coaches 01398 323398
<http://ridlers.co.uk/>
Jury Rd Garage, Dulverton TA22 9EJ

South West Coaches 01963 33124
<http://www.southwestcoaches.co.uk/>
Southgate Rd, Wincanton BA9 9EB

Stagecoach South West 01392 427711
<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/south-west>
Matford Park Road, Exeter EX2 8FD