

Do you qualify for help?

Post-16 education transport in Cambridgeshire

A guide for students for the academic year
September 2020 to July 2021

For additional information please visit our website –
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport

Introduction

This booklet is for students / parents wishing to apply for Post-16 travel assistance for the academic year 2020/2021.

This booklet explains:

- the circumstances in which Cambridgeshire County Council / Local Authority (LA) will provide assistance with transport
- how to apply, including applications for students with special educational needs, medical needs and disabilities.

All transport applications will be determined on the individual circumstances including the course applied for, distance from home address to the post-16 centre and the availability of a route. You are advised to check with the LA regarding the transport implications of your choice of centre by emailing: post16transport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or by phone: 0345 045 5208.

1 Do I qualify for assistance with post-16 education transport costs?

Under Cambridgeshire County Council's travel assistance policy eligibility is based upon the student attending the nearest appropriate post-16 centre to their home address.

For the academic year 2020/2021 the LA can help you with transport costs if you are:

- a. Living within the area where Cambridgeshire is the Local Authority.
- b. Attending your nearest appropriate post-16 centre (see section 2), either at a school, college or University Technical College.
- c. Enrolled on a full-time course with a minimum of 15 taught hours per week.
- d. Over compulsory school age but under 19 on 31 August 2020 or on a course of further education which started before you reached the age of 19. If you are a student with special educational needs you must be under 25 on the 31 August 2020 and should contact the Special Educational Needs Team on 01480 372775 for more information.
- e. Resident at an address which is three miles or more from your nearest appropriate post-16 centre measured by the shortest available walking route.
- f. Able to complete the single journey within 90 minutes travel time.
- g. Either the student or a member of their household are in receipt of -
 - Income Support
 - Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (we do not accept contribution based job seekers allowance)
 - Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
 - Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
 - NHS Tax Exemption certificate. We require a photocopy or scanned copy of the entitlement confirmation stating the expiry date.
 - Universal Credit with a household monthly net income of no more than £935

Please note a full copy of Cambridgeshire County Council's Home to School / College Travel Assistance Policy can be viewed on our website at:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport

For students with special educational needs, medical needs and disabilities please refer to section 3.

2 What is my nearest appropriate post-16 centre?

2.1 The nearest appropriate post-16 centre: definition

The nearest appropriate post-16 centre (NAC) is defined as the school, college or university technical college that:

- regardless of county boundaries is nearest to the student's family home
- and / or where appropriate, named by the LA as the school, college or university technical college catchment for the student's family address
- and offers the main essentials of the course required by the student, both in terms of type and level with regard to higher education and / or careers outcomes

2.2 If you choose not to attend the nearest appropriate post-16 centre

If you choose to attend a centre other than your NAC you will be responsible for your transport arrangements and costs. You may be able to purchase a seat on one of the County Council's contracted vehicles.

2.3 Other information

- a. If there are specific reasons for your choice of subjects (for instance career or higher education aspirations) please include these on the application form using the space provided, or attach a separate sheet. Failure to do so may delay your application being processed.
- b. If the NAC does not offer a particular subject, subject mix (for example at A-Level) or a particular range of module options, it is highly unlikely that assistance with transport will be provided to a more distant centre.
- c. The LA will seek advice from relevant careers advisers / experts to help determine students' eligibility for assistance with transport costs where necessary.

Please note if you have applied to and been refused a place at your NAC and are therefore applying for a more distant centre you must include your refusal letter.

3 Students with special educational needs, medical needs and disabilities

As an LA we expect young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to travel independently, either by public transport, or on foot, to their NAC unless their SEND, medical needs or disability prevents them from accessing public transport or walking.

Students with SEND may be eligible for transport assistance to their NAC (please see Sections 1 and 2 for further information) in the same way that students without SEND may be eligible. If you wish to apply for transport assistance please complete the post-16 transport application form.

If you have SEND, a medical need, or a disability that prevents you from accessing public transport or walking to your NAC you may be eligible for supported transport up to the age of 25.

Applications for post-16 SEN transport need to be made to the Statutory Assessment Team, contact details below. As part of the application process you will need to provide clear evidence outlining why you are unable to travel on public transport or on foot.

If you are eligible for supported transport the LA will in the first instance explore whether a parent/carer can provide transport and be remunerated for their fuel costs. All claims for assistance need to be agreed in writing before transport commences and payment can be made.

For further information or to request a post-16 SEN transport application form please contact the Statutory Assessment Team on 01480 372775, or by email at: start@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

4 Do I qualify for transport?

In order to qualify for transport you must meet ALL of the criteria set out in Sections 1 and 2 and be claiming or have a member of your household who are claiming one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (we do not accept contribution based job seekers allowance)
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- NHS Tax Exemption certificate. We require a photocopy or scanned copy of the entitlement confirmation stating the expiry date.
- Universal Credit with a household monthly net income of no more than £935

Please do not send original documents as we are unable to return these to you.

How much do I need pay?

£390 for the full academic year (£130 per term or £65 per half term).

5 What are the transport charges for children in care / care leavers?

If you are a child in care or a care leaver under the care of the LA you will be eligible for free transport if you are attending your NAC. Proof of status will be required in the form of a letter on headed paper from your Social Worker.

6 If I do not qualify for help with post-16 transport costs, can I pay to travel on the school or college bus?

If you do not meet the conditions set out in Sections 1 and 2 you may be able to pay to travel on buses contracted to the County Council where spare seats are available at a cost of £250 per term.

- Tickets are issued strictly on a first come, first served basis and can only be agreed on a termly basis.
- The allocation of a ticket for one term does not guarantee a ticket for subsequent terms. Pre-payment for more than one term in the expectation this will secure a place in the future will not be accepted. Cheques to this effect will be returned.
- Cambridgeshire County Council cannot guarantee to give advance warning of seats that are no longer available.
- The spare seat pass is not available for use on public services buses provided by commercial operators. In this case you should apply to the bus company directly for a season ticket.
- It is important to note that you may not hear about your application for a spare seat until the half term holiday after your application is for (i.e. October, February or May) as we have to ensure that all entitled pupils and Post 16 students are allocated a seat before we process spare seat applications. You must therefore, ensure that you have alternative travel arrangements in place for the start of the school term.
- If the spare seat application is not approved until a later date in the term you will be advised accordingly regarding any reduced rates.

The spare seat pass should be received within 10 days of your application being processed.

7 Rail Travel

Currently the local train operator is offering Cambridgeshire Post-16 students a 50% discount on travel. Updated information regarding offers and discounts for students can be found at:

www.greatnorthernrail.com/tickets/discounts-and-railcards/student-connect

8 How do I apply for post-16 transport?

To apply for post-16 transport you need to complete the online application form, which is available on our website – www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport.

You will need to include the following with your application –

- A passport sized photo as it is a requirement that all post-16 students' passes display a current photograph.
- A full copy of all your benefit documents (if applicable). Please note we cannot return original documents.
- If you have been refused a place at another post-16 centre, please also include a copy of your refusal letter.

Please note an incomplete or incorrect application will result in the application being rejected.

8.1 Periods of peak demand

During the months of July, August and September we handle a high volume of telephone calls and e-mails. Consequently please allow three working days for a response to phone messages and up to 15 days for a response to e-mails.

We will normally issue your pass before the start of term or within 15 working days of receiving your application, depending on date of receipt. It may not be possible to process your application within this timescale during periods of peak demand. If you have started your course and meet the entitlement criteria, the LA will only consider reimbursement of travel costs (incurred on the journey to and / or from college) if receipts / tickets are provided. Please note that refunds for any travel costs incurred to induction days will not be provided.

Applications are normally processed within 15 working days.

Please note the 15 working days to issue passes commences on the date that we receive ALL of the necessary information / documentation required to process applications.

9 Important additional information

Medical

If the student has a long term medical condition that affects their ability to walk and they live less than 3 miles from the NAC, they may qualify for assistance with the transport if:

- The student meets the eligibility criteria.
- If, without the provision of transport, they would not be able to access their nearest appropriate centre.

Where applications are made under medical grounds the LA will seek a statement from the student's GP or Consultant.

If transport support is granted on medical grounds the relevant termly charge is required. Please contact post16transport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or 01223 699790 for further details.

Transport assistance

Transport assistance is not provided by the LA if you are enrolled on any of the following –

- Degree
- Higher National Certificate
- Higher National Diploma (HND)
- Modern Apprenticeship
- NVQ 4/5
- Worked Based Learning
- Youth Training Scheme

Code of conduct

A student who fails to meet the standards set out in the Code of Conduct for home to school / college travel will receive an official warning about their conduct. Further breaches of the Code of Conduct, after a warning letter has been issued, will result in a student being banned from the transport for a set period. Where a ban has been issued, it will be the responsibility of the student or the student's parent / carer, to arrange transport to and from college for the period of the ban.

Cycling allowance

A termly allowance – currently £40 per term – may be payable to students who are entitled to subsidised transport assistance but use a bicycle to travel to school / college. A separate "claim for cycling allowance" form needs to be completed at the end of each term. Forms are available from the Council's website –

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport

10 Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Q. Why is transport not provided when students must stay on at school/college until they are 18?

A. The requirement is for all young people to continue in learning or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18, this is known as the Raising the Participation Age (RPA). This does not mean that young people must stay on at school once they reach 16; this is still the statutory school leaving age. They are able to choose from one of the following:

- Full-time education, such as school, college or home education
- Apprenticeships, work based learning
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for at least 20 hours per week.

There is a duty upon the Council to help facilitate a young person's access to appropriate post-16 provision, but no obligation to fund transport arrangements.

Q. How will young people, who are not entitled, get to college?

A. Those who do not qualify under the Council's Post-16 Travel Assistance Policy for financial support will need to make their own travel arrangements to and from college. Some colleges operate their own transport services, therefore, students may wish to contact their chosen centre directly for information regarding services available in their area.

Q. Is there any alternative financial support available?

A. The 16-19 Bursary Fund has been set up by the government specifically to help young people who are in need of additional support with the costs associated with their continuing education or training. Further information regarding the fund, including eligibility criteria and the application process is available directly from each post-16 centre.

Q. What are the normal travel arrangements?

A. The LA undertakes to provide a return journey for entitled students to and from school or college, for travel at the beginning and end of each school / college day during official term time at the most economical cost to the LA.

The LA operates a 'No Pass, No Travel' policy. Students will be refused travel if they do not provide a valid pass upon request.

Q. What must I do if I lose my bus pass?

A. If you have lost your pass you can apply for a replacement at a cost of £8.50 via the Council's website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport or by contacting the Social & Education Transport Team (SETT) on 0345 045 5208. Please note you will only be entitled to one replacement pass per term. If you lose your pass twice in the same term you will have to pay the full cost of a new pass.

Q. What must I do if I lose my rail pass?

- A.** If you have lost your rail pass you will need to contact the rail operator via their website using your account details to log on.

If your pass was issued by Cambridgeshire County Council you can apply for a replacement pass via the Council's website or by contacting SETT on 0345 045 5208. The replacement will cost between £10 and £20 depending on the rail operator.

Please note you will only be entitled to two replacement passes during the life of the pass. If you exceed that you will have to pay full cost for another pass.

Q. Which LA do I apply to if I'm attending a post-16 centre within Cambridgeshire but live in another LA area?

- A.** You should apply to your home LA for transport. Your home LA will have its own policy on post-16 transport and you will need to contact them to determine your eligibility. Contact details of neighbouring LAs are provided on the back page of this booklet.

Q. What happens if I leave before I complete my course?

- A.** If you withdraw from your post-16 studies at any stage, you must return your pass immediately to SETT. If the pass is returned:
- Before half term, a refund will be issued for the term in question and any subsequent terms for which payment has been made.
 - After half term, no refund will be issued for the term in question. Payments for subsequent terms will be refunded.

Q. I have transferred to a new course at college. Am I still entitled to transport?

- A.** Providing you are attending the NAC for the new course you have chosen, you will still be entitled to assistance with the transport costs. However if it is not your nearest centre, assistance with transport costs cannot be guaranteed.

Q. Does the LA provide assistance with transport costs to independent centres?

- A.** No.

Neighbouring Local Authorities

Bedford Borough Council	01234 228431
Central Bedfordshire Council	0300 300 8000
Essex County Council	0845 603 220
Hertfordshire County Council	01992 556765
Lincolnshire County Council	01522 782020
Norfolk County Council	03458 008003
Northamptonshire County Council	01604 364496
Peterborough City Council	01733 317455
Suffolk County Council & Mid Suffolk District Council	08456 066067

Social and Education Transport Team (SETT)
Cambridgeshire County Council
Box Number SH1013
Shire Hall
Castle Hill
Cambridge
CB3 0AP

Telephone: 0345 045 5208 (Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm and Saturday, 9am-1pm)
Email: edtransport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
post16transport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport