

## Admissions and Transport Team

### Assistance with Home to School/College travel for Surrey students of sixth form age 2011/2012

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The majority of students aged 16-19 will be expected to take advantage of the Surrey Student Fare Card for reduced rate bus and/or rail travel to school sixth forms and colleges. See Section 8 for more details of Surrey's Student Fare Cards for bus and rail.
- 1.2 However it is recognised that some students might need additional assistance with travel costs and this guidance sets out Surrey County Council's policy on home to school/college travel for the 2011/2012 academic year for students who are aged 16 to 19 and who live in Surrey.

#### 2 Eligibility

- 2.1 Assistance with travel can be granted to students if they meet one of the criteria set out in a) to e) below:
- a) Students who are in receipt of an Education Maintenance Allowance payment of at least £20 a week if they received assistance with travel in 2010/11 from Surrey County Council and if they are continuing on the same course of study.
  - b) Students who are in receipt of a guaranteed bursary (for students in care, care leavers and those on income support).
  - c) Students whose family is in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit or one of the following benefits:
    - Income Support
    - Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance (IBJSA)
    - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
    - Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) that does not exceed £16,190
    - Financial support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
    - Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
  - d) Students who are unable to use the Student Fare Card because their sixth form or college is not on a public transport route for which the Student Fare Card applies.
  - e) Students who have a disability and/or have learning difficulties and/or who are medically ill and who will incur extra transport costs to travel to school/college as a result of that disability or condition. Evidence of the disability and/or learning difficulty and why it would cause the student to incur extra costs must be provided from a GP and/or Consultant. Where appropriate the County Council reserves the right to seek the view of Surrey County Council's Designated Medical Officer. It also

reserves the right to refer the student to an Independent Travel Trainer so that they might develop skills to travel independently in future.

2.2 Students must **also** satisfy the following criteria:

- be ordinarily resident in Surrey County Council; **and**
- be 16 to 18 years of age (or aged 19, if they are continuing a course that they started before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday) and in Year 12 or 13 at school, or attending a course of further education at college; **and**
- be attending a publicly maintained school/college within the United Kingdom; **and**
- be attending a full-time, non-advanced course of at least one academic year duration. A full-time course is classified as a course with a minimum attendance of 12 hours a week; **and**
- be attending a course that is not available at a school/college closer to the student's home address (unless the student is continuing into the sixth form of a school that they received transport assistance to in Year 11); **and**
- not be in receipt of help towards their travel costs from any other source; **and**
- the walking distance between the home and the school/college must be more than three miles.

2.3 Where a similar course is available at a closer school/college, the student will be expected to demonstrate how their chosen course meets their needs above this other similar course in order to qualify for travel assistance (unless the student is continuing into the sixth form of a school that they received transport assistance to in Year 11).

2.4 The walking distance between the home and the school is measured as the shortest reasonable walking route.

2.5 Distances will be measured using the Admissions & Transport Team's Geographical Information System from the address point of the student's house, as set by Ordnance Survey, to the nearest school/college gate available for students to use.

2.6 Assistance will not normally be awarded if a voluntary house-move results in the prescribed distance being breached. However, special consideration may be given as a result of an enforced permanent council move.

2.7 The authority makes no provision for assistance with travel to children attending independent schools or private colleges.

### **3 Assistance available**

3.1 Students cannot choose the type of transport assistance they will receive. They will be expected to travel by the cheapest form of transport so the County Council can provide the most cost-effective service.

3.2 Where a student is in receipt of an Educational Maintenance Allowance of at least £20 a week or in receipt of a guaranteed bursary and where they received transport assistance during the 2010/11 academic year towards a course that they are continuing on in 2011/12, they can apply for reimbursement of part of their travel costs to school/college where their fares amount to more than £10 per week. Agreed reimbursement of costs in excess of £10 per week when using a Student Fare Card as

appropriate will be made at the end of each term on receipt of a claim form accompanied by receipts for tickets purchased (using a Surrey Student Fare Card as appropriate) and confirmation of attendance at school/college. Students under this criterion who travel on school contract coaches or other contract vehicles will normally be invoiced termly in advance (£127 per term equivalent to £10.00 per week). More frequent invoice arrangements will be considered in cases of hardship.

- 3.3 Where a student's family is in receipt of one of the benefits listed in paragraph 2.1 (c) support will be provided if the student's fares amount to more than £3.31 a day when using a Student Fare Card as appropriate. Agreed reimbursement of costs in excess of £3.31 a day will be made at the end of each term on receipt of a claim form accompanied by receipts for tickets purchased (using a Surrey Student Fare Card as appropriate) and confirmation of attendance at school/college.
- 3.4 Where a student is unable to use the Student Fare Card to get to school or college they will be expected to make a contribution towards their travel costs of £3.31 a day:
- If there is a seat on a contract coach or other contract vehicle traveling to the school and the student takes up this place then they will normally be invoiced termly in advance (£210 per term which is equivalent to £3.31 per day). More frequent invoice arrangements will be considered in cases of hardship.
  - If the student travels on alternative public transport routes the amount to be reimbursed will be the equivalent cost when traveling by the lowest equivalent public transport rate, less £3.31 a day. Costs will be reimbursed at the end of each term on receipt of a claim form accompanied by receipts for tickets purchased and confirmation of attendance at school/college.
- 3.5 Where a student has a disability, a learning difficulty and/or is medically ill and cannot travel on public transport as a result of that disability or condition they will be expected to make a contribution towards their travel costs of £3.31 a day:
- If there is a seat on a contract coach or other contract vehicle traveling to the school and the student takes up this place then they will normally be invoiced termly in advance (£210 per term which is equivalent to £3.31 per day). More frequent invoice arrangements will be considered in cases of hardship.
  - Alternatively a taxi may be provided to take the student from home to school/college but the student will be invoiced for their contribution of £3.31 per day termly in advance.
- 3.6 Assistance to students who use private transport will normally only be considered if no public transport service or Surrey contracted vehicle is available between home and school/college, unless the student has a disability, a learning difficulty and/or is medically ill and cannot travel on public transport as a result of that disability or condition. If it is agreed to provide support towards private transport the student will be offered a petrol allowance to contribute to their costs only if the equivalent journey by car would exceed the student contribution when applying Surrey County Council's approved mileage rate. The petrol allowance to be paid will be the amount in excess of the amount that the student is expected to contribute to their costs.
- 3.7 Other than in cases where a student has a disability, a learning difficulty and/or is medically ill, taxis will not be provided unless there is no alternative mode of transport available that will get the student to school/college within 75 minutes.
- 3.8 Travel assistance will only be agreed for costs incurred at the start and end of the day.

- 3.9 Travel assistance will only be agreed for the course being applied for. If the student changes course or school/college they will be required to make a fresh application.
- 3.10 Travel assistance will be withdrawn if at any time it is discovered that the application has been made fraudulently and the Local Authority will seek reimbursement of any monies that have been paid out in respect of the travel claim. Surrey County Council reserve the right to take legal action against any parent who has made a fraudulent application for free home to school transport.
- 3.11 Travel assistance that has been agreed in error or where it is discovered that the student lives within the prescribed distance will be withdrawn.
- 3.12 No reimbursements of travel costs incurred prior to application will be made
- 3.13 The County Council will not accept requests for reimbursement for registration or exam fees, or for travel costs for educational visits or placements, or the cost of the Surrey Student Fare Card.

#### **4. Young people with statements of Special Educational Needs**

- 4.1 Young people do not automatically qualify for free travel because they have a statement of special educational needs. There is a separate transport policy for young people with a statement of special educational needs who are attending school and who have a need for transport as part of their statement. A copy of this policy is available from the Special Educational Needs Team on 020 8770 6594.

#### **5. Special consideration**

- 5.1 Students who do not satisfy the conditions of this policy but who wish their case to be given exceptional consideration and those who believe a decision to refuse transport to be incorrect may apply for their case to be considered at Transport Case Review.
- 5.2 It is important that for Transport Case Reviews the student sets out whether they believe the original decision to be wrong or whether they wish their case to be considered as an exception to the policy. As such students will be asked to complete a Transport Case Review form which they must return with a personal letter giving details of their case, together with any appropriate independent supporting evidence.
- 5.3 Transport Case Reviews will be carried out by a Panel of at least three senior officers within three weeks from receipt of the Transport Case Review form.

#### **6. Changes in circumstances**

- 6.1 Any change in circumstances, at any time, that might affect eligibility for assistance with the cost of travel, such as a change of address, course, school or college, or the student leaving the school or college, must be notified immediately in writing to the Admissions and Transport team.

6.2 If a student moves out of the administrative area of Surrey County Council the student will have their transport support withdrawn. Responsibility for travel will rest with the Local Authority in whose area the child has moved in to.

## **7. How can students apply?**

7.1 The application form is normally available in June of the year prior to the start of the academic year.

7.2 Students should complete the application form fully and return it to the Admissions and Transport team.

7.3 Completed application forms will be processed according to the following timescales:

Application form received before the end of July	processed by mid-September
Application form received in August	processed by end of September
Application form received at other times	processed within 3 weeks

7.4 Assistance with travel will normally only be agreed for the minimum time required to complete the course. Unless there are extenuating circumstances the Local Authority would not expect to assist with repeat years. However an application form must be completed for each year of the course and support will not be renewed automatically.

## **8. Student Fare Cards on bus and rail**

8.1 Bus and Train Student Fare Cards for students aged 16 – 18 years old are issued by The Student Fare Card Team, Surrey County Council, Floor 3, Conquest House, Wood Street, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 1AB and application leaflets are available from the Contact Centre (0345 600 9009) and at schools, colleges and libraries.

**Need to add in more once changes to Student Fare Cards are agreed**