

Somerset County Council Travel Policy Statement 2020/21 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 (including academies and free schools)/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 transport options for students aged between 16 and 19 to access Post 16 education at a school sixth form, further education establishment, a Local Authority commissioned learning provider or attending College as part of a work-based learning course.

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 eligible 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

- Enabling travel provision to remove barriers to learning and training for those from vulnerable groups and/or those most likely not to be in education, employment or training

Student Tickets

Due to the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, Somerset County Council will not be offering the County Ticket scheme for the 2020/21 academic year.

Due to potential social distancing measures and possible changes to the level of College attendance required from September 2020, an annual pre-paid ticket is not the most viable option.

Due to the potential reduction in the number of days students may need to attend College, the County Ticket option would not be the most cost-effective solution for students at this stage. For those students needing to travel via public transport, then purchasing one of the ticket options offered by the public transport operators would be more cost-effective. Details of the individual operators and ticket options can be found below on pages 3 and 4.

For those students attending Post 16 provision at either a Local Authority Sixth form school or an Academy, there is the option of applying for a paid seat on the contracted school bus, **where there is space available**.

It is important to note that there is no guarantee of seat availability as this can only be accommodated where there is sufficient capacity within Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) 2020 and where this can be done safely within the anticipated social distancing requirements. At the time of publication, the modelling is based on the assumption that social distancing measures will have relaxed slightly by September to a 1 metre distance, as opposed to the current 2 metre distance and that schools will be able to accommodate flexibility to allow transport to undertake double runs. In the event that these assumptions do not come to fruition, this will significantly limit the capacity on the contracted routes and the ability to accommodate any request.

Students are recommended to have a contingency plan in the event that their request cannot be accommodated.

Where the Local authority can accommodate Post 16 pay seats to sixth form schools and academies, the charge for this ticket is £830 for the academic year 2020/21. There is a direct debit option available to enable students to spread the payment over the year. Students are advised to check the attendance requirements of their 6th form College from September to determine whether this is the most cost-effective option.

To apply for a seat on the contracted school bus, please use the standard pay seat application form (see link below) but **mark clearly on your application that it is for 6th form travel.**

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/school-transport/#Request-school-transport-on-a-paying-basis>

Student Ticket Offers available for the 2020/21 Academic Year –

(Please note that all fares (where available) are correct at the time of publication in June 2020)

Public bus operators offer a range of tickets, with some operators offering daily tickets, as well as ticket bundles. The list below is not comprehensive, and you are strongly advised to contact the operator of the service you intend to use directly or visit their website 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 pages 16 and 17 of this policy document.

Buses of Somerset

Buses of Somerset offer a number of ticket options including ticket bundles, a weekly ticket and an mticket (which can be purchased through the mobile phone mticket App).

Please visit the Buses of Somerset website for more information on ticket options and fares or contact the operator.

Hatch Green Coaches

A £5-day return ticket will be available from 1 September 2020 on College days only for bus services 10C, 19, 23, 23B, 51, 613 and 624.

For all other Hatch Green bus services please contact the operator.

First West of England

Young people (16-21) and students (of any age if in full time education) can get a discounted rate on all tickets across the West of England (Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare & Wells).

Specific student tickets are available, details of which can be found on the First West of England website or contact the operator.

Students must be in full time education and can show any student photo ID in order to purchase these specific student tickets

South West Coaches

A £5-day return ticket will be available from 1 September 2020 on College days only for bus services 646, 647, 648, and 652.

For all other South West Coaches bus services please contact the operator.

Libra Travel

A £5-day return ticket will be available from 1 September 2020 on College days only for bus services 31, 668, 519 and 649.

For all other Libra Travel bus services please contact the operator.

Financial Support for post-16 students

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. There are two types of 16-19 bursary:

1. A bursary of £1,200 per year if you are considered to be vulnerable;

The definition of 'vulnerable' includes those students where at least one of the following applies:

- You are in or recently left Local Authority care
- you get Income Support or Universal Credit because you're financially supporting yourself
- you get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- you get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit

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 you get your bursary, 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. For further information and an application form visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

Support available from Colleges in Somerset

This will vary between Colleges. At the time of publication, information relating to support and bursaries was not available from the main FE Colleges. Students are advised to contact the College direct, contact details are provided on pages 13-16.

Support available from Somerset County Council

Petrol allowances are available at 18 pence per mile up to a limit of £135.00 per annum for young people living more than three miles from their nearest bus stop to gain access to and from the local bus network. These allowances are not means tested. Students can request an application form for the petrol allowance via email to transport@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 2224

Students who are recent Care Leavers and require financial assistance should contact their social worker or leaving care worker, and/or their College. The College will be able to provide advice on bursaries available.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Where a post 16 student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and is attending the school/College named within their EHCP as the nearest appropriate school/College for their post 16 education – public transport will be promoted for this group and independent travel training referrals will be made for all students with the expectation that they will be assessed for suitability for training by the end of the first term of post 16 education.

Somerset County Council may provide a 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.

All eligible students will have to pay a contribution of £830 for the 2020/21 academic year. For applications received after the start of term the full contribution amount will still apply.

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 and only where this is assessed as the most appropriate and efficient option).

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 School/College day. Travel assistance cannot be provided to meet a student's

individual timetable. Additional journeys outside of the start and end of the School/College Day will be the responsibility of the student, parent or carer to arrange and fund.

Travel assistance is not provided for induction days, transitional periods, medical appointments nor work experience.

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 (EHCP) it does not necessarily mean travel assistance will be provided by the local authority. An application for travel assistance will need to be submitted and an assessment for eligibility undertaken.

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 distance to the relevant establishment (over 3 miles statutory walking distance). Further evidence will be required if the student does not meet this requirement.
- 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
- Proven progression/benefits on chosen course
- Whether the student is applying for transport to their nearest college, 6th form college or school offering their chosen or a **comparable** (not necessarily the same) course.
- 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.

Travel assistance for SEND students who reach the age of 19 (sixth form age duty) 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 SEND students aged 19-25 (Adult learners)

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. This is for students with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation. A new application will need to be made for each Academic year of study in order for travel assistance to be reviewed and continued, where eligible.

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. Please note that there will be no contribution charge for these learners.

Application process for SEND students

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

https://secure1.somerset.gov.uk/forms/ShowForm.asp?fm_formalias=TAAFESE
[N](#)

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 eligibility for travel assistance will automatically continue each year.

Independent Travel Training Scheme for SEND students

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. Whilst the student is training the cost of travel will be covered by the Travel Trainers. If the independent travel training has been successful the student will be required to pay for their travel on the public bus. Public bus operators offer a range of ticket options, details of which can be found on page 3 of this Policy, along with contact details for the individual operators. Please note refusal to participate in this scheme may result in travel assistance being withdrawn.

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

Avalon School
01458 443081
sch.610@educ.somerset.gov.uk
www.avalonschool.net

Bath College (Somerset Valley Campus)
01225 312191
enquiries@bathcollege.ac.uk
www.bathcollege.ac.uk

Bridgwater & Taunton College (Bridgwater campus)
01278 455464
info@btc.ac.uk
www.btc.ac.uk

Bridgwater & Taunton College (Cannington campus)
01278 455464
info@btc.ac.uk
www.btc.ac.uk

Bridgwater & Taunton College (Taunton campus)
01823 366366
info@btc.ac.uk
www.btc.ac.uk

Critchill School
01373 464148
office@critchillschool.com
www.critchill.somerset.sch.uk

Fairmead School
01935 421295
office@fairmeadschool.co.uk
www.fairmeadschool.co.uk

Fiveways School
01935 476227
fiveways@educ.somerset.gov.uk
www.fivewayschool.co.uk

Penrose School
01278 411222
Sch.602@educ.somerset.gov.uk
www.penrose-school.org.uk

Richard Huish College
01823 320800
hello@huish.ac.uk
www.huish.ac.uk

Selworthy School
01823 284970
office@selworthy.oak.education
www.selworthy.somerset.sch.uk

Somerset County Council
0300 123 2224
transport@somerset.gov.uk
www.somerset.gov.uk

Strode College
01458 844400
courseinfo@strode-college.ac.uk
www.strode-college.ac.uk

Wiltshire College Trowbridge
01225 350035
info@wiltshire.ac.uk
www.wiltshire.ac.uk

Yeovil College
01935 423921
enrol@yeovil.ac.uk
www.yeovil.ac.uk

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. Students applying for a seat on a contracted bus should do so by 20th July 2020 to enable capacity requirement to be reviewed and scholar bus tickets to be produced for September, where there is space available. Applicants with learning disabilities and /or other disabilities should refer to the information provided above and apply before 13th July 2020. Late applications may not be processed in time for the start of term.

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 the student should look into the ticket options available on the public service routes. Petrol allowances are available at 18 pence per mile up to a limit of £135.00 per annum for young people living more than three miles from their nearest bus stop to gain access to and from the local bus network, or where there is no public transport available. These allowances are not means tested. Students can request an application form for the petrol allowance via email to transport@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 2224.

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 for eligible students 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.

Appeals and Complaints Process – All students

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 for students with SEND then please contact the Admissions and Entitlements team. For all other applications please contact Transporting Somerset who will be able to offer advice and guidance about the review process.

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.
0300 123 2224
www.somerset.gov.uk

Local Bus Services (Traveline)
0871 200 22 33
www.travelinesw.com

Community Transport /Dial-Ride services
0845 345 9155
www.travelsomerset.co.uk

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

The Blue School
01749 678799
office@blue.somerset.sch.uk
www.theblueschoolwells.co.uk

Bridgwater & Taunton College (Bridgwater Campus)
01278 455464
info@btc.ac.uk
www.btc.ac.uk

Bridgwater & Taunton College (Taunton Campus)
01823 366366
info@btc.ac.uk
www.btc.ac.uk

Frome Community College
01373 465353
office@fromecollege.org
www.fromecollege.org

Holyrood Academy
01460 260100
sch.517@educ.somerset.gov.uk
www.holyroodacademy.com

Huish Episcopi Academy
01458 250501
office@huishepiscopi.somerset.sch.uk
www.huishepiscopi.net

King Alfred School
01278 784881
info@tkasa.org.uk
www.tkasa.org.uk

The Kings of Wessex Academy
01934 742608
office@kovessex.co.uk
www.kovessex.co.uk

Midsomer Norton Sixth Form
01761 402280
sixthformadmin@msnsixth.com
www.msnsixth.com

Richard Huish College
01823 320800
hello@huish.ac.uk
www.huish.ac.uk

Somervale School
01761 414276
enquiries@somervaleschool.com
www.somervaleschool.com

The Space, Heathfield Community School
01823 412820
info@thespacesomerset.co.uk
www.thespacesomerset.co.uk

Strode College
01458 844400
courseinfo@strode-college.ac.uk
www.strode-college.ac.uk

The Taunton Academy
01823 348200
reception@thetauntonacademy.com
www.thetauntonacademy.com

Wadham School
01460 270123
office@wadhamschool.co.uk
www.wadhamschool.co.uk

West Somerset College
01643 706061
enquiries@westsomersetcollege.org
www.westsomersetcollege.org

Writhlington School
01761 433581
info@writhlington.org.uk
www.writhlington.org.uk

Yeovil College
01935 423921
enrol@yeovil.ac.uk
www.yeovil.ac.uk

Neighbouring Schools and Colleges:

Bath College
01225 312191
info@bathcollege.ac.uk
www.bathcollege.ac.uk

Bicton College
0330 123 4782
customer.services@bicton.ac.uk
www.bicton.ac.uk

Exeter College
01392 400500
info@exe-coll.ac.uk
www.exe-coll.ac.uk

The Gryphon School
01935 813122
office@gryphon.dorset.sch.uk
www.gryphon.dorset.sch.uk

Petroc College (Tiverton Campus)
01884 235200
guidancecentretiverton@petroc.ac.uk
www.petroc.ac.uk

St Augustines
01225 350001
admin@sta.cc
www.st-augustines.wilts.sch.uk

Saint Gregory's Bath
01225 832873
stgregorys_sec@bathnes.gov.uk
www.st-gregorys.org.uk

Weston College
01934 411411
enquiries@weston.ac.uk
www.weston.ac.uk

Wiltshire College
01225 350035
info@wiltshire.ac.uk
www.wiltshire.ac.uk

Major Bus Operators in Somerset:

Berry's Coaches
01823 331356
info@berryscoaches.co.uk
www.berryscoaches.co.uk
Peter Clifford House, Great Western Way, Taunton TA2 6BX

First West of England
0345 646 0707
www.firstgroup.com/bristol-bath-and-west
Enterprise House, Easton Rd, Bristol, BS5 0DZ

Buses of Somerset
0345 646 0707
www.firstgroup.com/somerset
Taunton Bus Station, Tower Street, TA1 4AF

FromeBus
01373 471474
www.fromebus.co.uk
George's Ground, Marston Trading Estate, Frome, BA11 4RP

Hatch Green Coaches
01823 480338
info@hatchgreencoaches.co.uk
www.hatchgreencoaches.co.uk
Hatch Green Garage, Hatch Beauchamp, TA3 6TN

Libra Travel
01373 812255
Buckland Down Cottage, Buckland Down, Buckland Dinham, Frome, BA11 2RG

Ridlers Coaches
01398 323398
info@ridlers.co.uk
www.ridlers.co.uk
Jury Rd Garage, Dulverton, TA22 9EJ

South West Coaches
01963 33124
info@southwestcoaches.co.uk
www.southwestcoaches.co.uk
Southgate Rd, Wincanton, BA9 9EB

Dartline Coaches
01392 872900
info@dartline-coaches.co.uk
www.dartline-coaches.co.uk
Langdon Business Park, Clyst St Mary, Exeter, Devon, EX5 1AF