

Home to School Transport

Guidance 2016/17



Introduction

When considering whether to assist with home to school transport, Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to have regard to the Education Act 1996 and Schedule 35B of the Act which was inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Sections 508B and 508C of the Act makes provision for local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. Kent County Council has developed its transport policy in accordance with this legislation and equalities legislation to ensure it is able to meet its statutory duty.

This booklet sets out Kent's obligations to provide Home to School Transport to children living in Kent who are eligible to receive transport assistance.

In order to receive free transport assistance, learners must meet certain criteria to be eligible in accordance with Kent's Transport policy and this can be found on page 5 of the guidance.

The Transport Eligibility Team is responsible for assessing applications in accordance with Kent's Transport policy for all children. However, please be aware that they are unable to assess over the phone as applicants can only be assessed upon receipt of a valid application form.

Most applications for free transport last year were unsuccessful (70%). It is therefore important that parents understand whether they meet the criteria before taking the time to make an application. In most instances, children will not meet the statutory conditions for further support. For those children not entitled to free transport to school, then Kent County Council also offer the Young Person's Travel Pass, which is a discretionary pass subsidised by Kent County Council, and which the majority of children use to access their school.

If in light of the eligibility criteria set out in this booklet, you think it is unlikely your child is eligible to receive free transport assistance, this booklet provides you with information regarding the other discretionary options for transport that may be available for your child to attend school

The Young Persons Travel Pass, and the Kent 16+ Travel Card, are available to Kent Learners, who are **not eligible** to receive free transport.

These alternative transport options can be accessed on the following websites.

www.kent.gov.uk/youngpersonstravelpass
www.kent.gov.uk/vacantseatpaymentscheme
www.kent.gov.uk/kent16plustravelcard

Further information on these options can also be found on page 5, 11 and 15 respectively or you can email

youngpersonstravelpass@kent.gov.uk
kent16plustravelcard@kent.gov.uk

Please remember that if you had applied previously for free home to school transport, unless your circumstances have changed i.e. changed schools or moved address or because the needs of the child have changed, **do not** reapply for free transport as it will be refused again. In these instances, you should apply directly for a Young Persons Travel Pass or a Kent 16+ Travel Card depending on your child's age.

If your circumstances have changed because of a medical condition or disability, please provide the Transport Eligibility Team with evidence from the consultant and email to

homeschooltransport@kent.gov.uk

Or send to
 The Transport Eligibility Team
 Rm 2.24, Sessions House
 County Hall Maidstone
 Kent ME14 1XQ

It is **strongly recommended** that all parents read this guidance carefully along with the information on our website at www.kent.gov.uk/schooltransport.

You can scan applications and attach them to emails along with a photograph of your child and any other correspondence to support your application of your child (for use on the pass) and any other to homeschooltransport@kent.gov.uk

The information given in this booklet relates to the 2016 – 2017 school year and the details are correct as of January 2016.

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Kent's transport policy

Identifying Scholars entitled to support

All applications are assessed on an individual basis in accordance with Kent's Transport Policy.

The policy requires that a child must:

- Attend the nearest appropriate school for transport purposes **and;**
- Live more than 2 miles, for a child under the age of 8, from the school using the shortest available walking route.
- Live more than 3 miles, for a child over the age of 8, from the school using the shortest available walking route.

The 2 and 3 mile statutory distance is measured in the same way as the statutory walking route i.e. shortest available walking route. All distances are measured using Kent County Council's own software and children's applications are all assessed using the same software and on an individual basis for fairness and consistency.

Appropriateness falls into two categories:

- Age appropriate, relating to attendance at a primary or secondary school
- Ability appropriateness, relating to attendance at a mainstream or special school.

The nearest appropriate school for transport purposes is the nearest geographical school that is suitable for the child's age and ability when the above criteria are applied. This can include church schools, Free schools or Academies.

For children who live in towns and villages close to the county border, it is particularly important to understand which is your closest school for transport purposes. Transport will only be provided to the nearest appropriate school where it is more than 3 miles from the home and in some parts of the county this may be a school located in another educational authority, outside of Kent.

Please note: Children assessed suitable for a grammar school do not automatically secure eligibility for transport assistance to a grammar school. All mainstream schools are required to be able to meet the educational needs of children across the mainstream eligibility range including those in the top 25% of the ability range. Just as a grammar school assessment does not guarantee entry into a grammar school, an offer of a place at a grammar school does not determine that transport will be provided if an alternative mainstream school or academy is closer to the home.

A grammar school is a parental choice and where it is not the nearest school, there may be no eligibility to receive transport.

Unlike other secondary mainstream schools that are able to cater for children across the entire ability range, grammar schools are not able to accommodate pupils below the top 25% of the ability range. Consequently where a child's nearest school to home is a grammar school but they have not been assessed suitable for grammar school, for transport purposes the grammar school will not be considered as the nearest school.

Low income families criteria

A child will qualify for transport assistance under the low income criteria if they meet the criteria of attending their nearest appropriate school **and** are entitled to receive free school meals or parents are in receipt of one of the benefits listed below:

- Income Support
- Income based jobseekers allowance
- Child Tax Credit (without Working Tax Credit and with an annual income of no more than £16,190)
- Guaranteed element of state pension credit
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Please note: When parents receive Child Tax Credit **but not** Working Tax Credit, the level of yearly income (currently £16,190) would be taken into account when assessing the child's eligibility.

If parents receive both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit, then the Working Tax Credit element overrides the Child Tax Credit element and parents must be in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit to qualify for transport assistance on low income grounds.

Children, who attend a primary school and who are aged 8 years but less than 11 years, must also:

- attend their nearest appropriate school for transport purposes **and;**
- live between 2-6 miles from the school.

Children attending a secondary school and therefore aged 11 years and over, must also:

- attend one of their three nearest appropriate schools for transport purposes **and;**
- live between 2-6 miles from the school.

Primary and secondary aged children, who are going to a church school must, in addition to receiving the benefits listed:

- live between 2 – 15 miles from the school
- have the application form signed by a vicar/priest of the same denomination as the school stating that the child is a regular and practising member of a church of the same denomination as the school.

The parent will also need to explain why their religion or belief makes it desirable for the child to attend that particular school rather than a nearer school, where the preferred school is not of the same religion or denomination as that practiced by the parent.

In addition, children in the care of Kent County Council (CIC) and children from Low Income Families, who are entitled to receive free school meals, will receive transport assistance to the **nearest grammar school** in the following circumstances.

To receive transport assistance the child:

- must have met the entry requirements of the grammar school
- been offered a place at the school
- the school must be the nearest school of that type to their home
- the distance from their home and the school must be between 2-15 miles.

Transport assistance may also be available where a child in the care of Kent County Council or a child from a Low Income Family is unable to secure a place at their nearest grammar school, but who has named their nearest grammar school as a preference on their admissions application form and secured a place at the next nearest grammar school providing it is not more than 15 miles from their home.

Applying for transport

Transport that is granted under the low income criteria is reviewed on an annual basis and renewal forms (T1R) are emailed/posted to parents/carers by the Local Authority normally in April, to ensure that the pass will be ready in September for them. Parents should return the T1R to this office as soon as possible with proof of benefit and no later than 31 July each year.

Children in Local Authority Care (CIC) are children under the age of 18 years for whom the Local Authority provides accommodation by agreement with their parents/carers (Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) or who is the subject of a care order under Part IV of the Act. This applies equally to children who immediately after being looked after by the Local Authority become subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order. (As defined by Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 or Section 8 or 14A of the Children Act 1989).

Children in the Care of Kent County Council do not have an automatic right to free home to school transport, they are assessed in accordance with Kent's Transport policy in the same way as for any other child. Carers can, however, apply for a Young Persons Travel Pass. This pass is free for all children in care until the age of 21. The application form will need to be endorsed by the child's case worker confirming that they are in care. Further information can be found on the following link

www.kent.gov.uk/youngpersonstravelpass

Parents must apply for transport using the transport application form T1A/T1B that can be found on the following link:

www.kent.gov.uk/schooltransport

Entitlement to free transport to school does not provide you with a free Young Person's Travel Pass which is subject to a separate application. At busy times of the year, applications for a Young Person's Travel Pass can take up to 28 days to process and therefore need to be received by the end of July if the pass is going to be ready for the start of term. If you are concerned that you may not be entitled to free transport to school then parents should consider applying for a Young Person's Travel Pass which can then be cancelled if the pass hasn't been collected from the school. Full details are available at www.kent.gov.uk/youngpersonstravelpass

To qualify for transport assistance, a primary aged child must attend their nearest appropriate school and be living more than two miles from the school via the shortest available walking route.

To qualify for transport assistance, a secondary aged child must attend their nearest appropriate school for transport purposes and be living more than three miles from this school via the shortest available walking route.

For children of both age groups, parents would have to apply to the nearest school or have named the nearest school on their child's admissions application form to be considered for home to school transport.

If the nearest school is not named as a higher preference on the admissions form, the child will not be eligible for transport.

Where parents apply for transport to start in a new academic year, the application form for a child attending a mainstream school needs to be received no later than **31 July** to guarantee a pass for the child on the first day of term. Due to the specialist nature of commissioning SEN transport, for

children attending a special school, the application form needs to be received no later than **15 March**.

If applications are received after these dates, whilst every effort will be made to issue a pass for a child for the first day of term, until transport is in place, it will be the parents'/carers responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their child to attend school.

When deciding which is the nearest appropriate school for transport purposes, the Local Authority do not take into account parents preference for a single-sexed, mixed, specialist or particular type of school. This means that children will not automatically receive transport assistance to any school that may offer them a place. Where parents name schools outside of their local area, in most cases it will be their responsibility to ensure their children can access their preferred school.

Where a younger sibling will attend the same school as an older sibling, who currently receives transport assistance, the younger sibling will not necessarily receive transport assistance just because the older one does. Each child is assessed in accordance with Kent's Transport policy on an individual basis. (Children already receiving transport assistance may be eligible under a previous policy, which will continue until they finish Yr11, change schools or move home).

No transport would be provided for a child to attend a fee paying mainstream independent school.

Transport assistance is only granted to one school. Any transport assistance to an additional off site provision or school, is the responsibility of the parent or the school where the child is on roll.

If parents have not been offered a place at any of their preferred schools and the Local Authority has offered a place at another school, parents may apply for help. Parents should remember that their child will not automatically get transport to and from any school that offers them a place.

If parents move after applying for transport assistance or whilst receiving assistance or their child moves to another school, parents must inform the Transport Eligibility Team as soon as possible. The transport assistance will

be reassessed against the new address or the school in accordance with Kent's Transport policy.

Parents should, therefore, ensure that they advise the team in advance of any move, to allow time for a new pass or alternative transport arrangements to be made available, if they are still deemed eligible to receive transport assistance from the new address. In the interim, it will be parents' responsibility to make their own arrangements to transport their children to and from school.

If the child's school is not deemed as the nearest school to the new home, the child may not be eligible to continue to receive the same transport assistance.

Distances

The 2 and 3 mile statutory distance is measured in the same way as the statutory walking route i.e. shortest available walking route. However, the 6 and 15 miles upper limits to a school are measured using vehicular road routes.

Distances are measured by the shortest available walking route. This may take into account public footpaths where they are available. The shortest available walking route is one where a child, accompanied as necessary by a responsible adult or parent, can walk safely. A route can only be considered hazardous, if it is hazardous for both an adult and child to walk.

All distances between children's homes and schools are measured using Kent County Council's own software and not any other internet measuring devices. In this way, all children are assessed consistently in the same way under the distance criterion.

For children with SEN and/or disabilities, journeys may be more complex and a shorter journey time, although desirable, may not always be possible.

Free transport/mode of transport

Free transport means children, who are eligible to receive transport assistance will usually be given a pass for public transport or where this is not appropriate a seat on a vehicle such as a coach or a minibus will be provided.

As a general guide, transport arrangements should not require a child to make several changes on public transport resulting in an unreasonably long journey time. Best practice suggests that the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age is 45 minutes. For secondary school children, the length of journey each way should be no more than 75 minutes.

Unfortunately, parents are not able to choose which bus, vehicle or other form of transport their child will travel on. The routes and types of transport are determined by the Public Transport Team based at Aylesford. They will determine the mode of transport that delivers the best value for money for Kent tax payers, taking into account any special arrangements needed to support the child's particular needs.

Where children with an EHC plan are provided with transport assistance, no guarantee can be given that the arrangements i.e. escort/driver, will stay the same throughout the child's attendance at school.

If the child requires more than one type of transport to travel to and from school, several passes may be provided e.g. bus and/or train pass in order for them to complete their journey.

If a child is deemed eligible for free transport to school, the transport eligibility team will advise parents by email or post. The child's details will then be passed to our Public Transport team who will identify the appropriate transport. Once they have done so, parents will be contacted by them to advise of the arrangements including those for the first day of term and where to collect any pass.

Additional journeys to different schools and/or addresses

Transport assistance is only provided from the child's home to the school at which they are on roll. If they attend another school or establishment that is arranged through their school as off site provision, it will be the school/parent's responsibility to arrange travel to and from that school or establishment, for their off-site learning.

The child's address will normally be the one that they spend the most school nights at, and any transport arrangements from an alternative address would be the responsibility of the parent to arrange.

Transport assistance would not be provided for any medical appointments or domestic arrangements for the child to go to or from a different address other than their main residence. Transport will also not be provided for breakfast or after school clubs or activities.

Transport assistance is also only valid for one journey to and from school and must be used at the beginning and end of normal school hours. Transport will not be provided on a flexible basis.

Medical conditions of the child/parent

To qualify for assistance on medical grounds, the child must be attending their nearest appropriate school. If their medical problems affect their ability to travel to and from school, parents must provide the team with evidence from their child's consultant to demonstrate the difficulties they have in walking or travelling on public transport in order to go to and from school, accompanied as necessary by a responsible adult or parent.

If transport is granted on medical grounds, the child's case will be reviewed on a regular basis and up to date information on their medical condition will be required at each review.

If the child has a statement of special educational needs, parents should provide the EHC Plan (statement) and any other information they feel will be helpful to support their child's application.

If a parent has medical problems that stop them from taking their children to and from school, transport assistance may exceptionally be granted. The child must attend their nearest appropriate school and parents must provide evidence of their medical problem from their Consultant.

As with a child's medical condition, transport granted because of a parent's medical condition will be reviewed on a regular basis and up to date evidence will be sought in order for the transport assistance to be continued.

Lost passes

For information regarding lost passes, parents should contact the Public Transport Team by:

Email: public.transport@kent.gov.uk or

telephone the relevant office:

- West Kent **03000 413825**
- East Kent **03000 414571**
- Mid Kent **03000 413583**

Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPTS)

Children who are not eligible for free transport to school and who cannot use a Young Person's Travel Pass can apply for a seat on our hired vehicles using our Vacant Seat Payment Scheme.

The scheme is only available where there is already a vehicle running and where there is space on it. The Council cannot make specific arrangements or change vehicle sizes to accommodate VSPTS applications.

Access to a seat under this scheme is not guaranteed and may be taken away at a later date if the places are needed for pupils who are entitled to free transport or if the County Council decides to run a smaller vehicle. VSPTS is not available on public transport. The 2016–2017 charge is £165 for the autumn and spring terms and £160 for the summer term for each pupil (this may vary).

The charge must be paid in advance. Part payments and pro-rata payments cannot be accepted. For more information and to apply for a seat under the scheme, please phone the numbers below:

- West Kent **03000 413825**
- East Kent **03000 414571**
- Mid Kent **03000 413583**

Young Persons Travel Pass

VSPS seats can only be offered after all applications for pupils entitled to receive assistance have been processed. This means that the Local Authority is usually unable to offer access to VSPS until several weeks after the term has started especially if there is a large number of children who are eligible for free transport that will need use of the vehicle.

If this is the case, parents will be responsible for making their own arrangements to get their child to and from the school until such time as they are contacted with a decision by the Public Transport Team.

Refunds are not available whilst parents are waiting to see if their child can be granted a seat during this time and it is also possible that even if a VSPS seat is granted, it may have to be taken away at a later date if it is needed for a child for whom the Local Authority has a legal responsibility to transport, if it not cost effective for the Local Authority to keep running the vehicle, or if it is decided to run a smaller vehicle.

If the seat is taken away, parents will be given until the end of the academic year, when they will have to make their own arrangements. The situation will be reviewed again at this time.

The application forms (T1A/T1B) are available on the following link and a box can be found on this application for parent to indicate that they wish their child to be considered for a seat under the scheme. Parents will then be notified by Public Transport if it has been possible to provide a seat under the scheme.

www.kent.gov.uk/schooltransport

The Young Persons Travel Pass supports parents with the cost of transport for children not legally entitled to transport to school. It enables young people in academic years 7-11 (and those put forward to year 12) that live in Kent to travel on public buses in the county, Mondays to Fridays between 6am and 7pm.

The standard fee is currently £250 per year (please note this is reviewed annually) after which travel is free at the point of use, except for a few number of bespoke bus services where an additional charge applies. The cost is reduced for low income households and free to some children who are in the Care of Kent County Council.

In addition Children in the Care of Kent County Council can access the Young Person's Travel Pass up to age 18.

Full details and terms and conditions, including a list of participating bus operators and service exceptions, are provided at www.kent.gov.uk/youngpersonstravelpass

Most applications can be made online at www.kent.gov.uk/youngpersonstravelpass although some reduced and free passes will need to be applied for in the post using the application form. Forms can be downloaded from the website or you can pick one up from the school.

Entitlement to free transport to school does not provide you with a free Young Person's Travel Pass and is subject to a separate application. At busy times of the year, applications for a Young Person's Travel Pass can take up to 28 days to process and therefore need to be received by the middle of July if the pass is going to be ready for the start of term. If you are concerned that you may not be entitled to free transport to school then parents should consider applying for a Young Person's Travel Pass which can then be cancelled if the pass hasn't been collected from the school.

The Young Persons Travel Pass is not valid on hired school taxis, minibuses, coaches or trains. If a child loses, damages, or has their Young Persons Travel Pass stolen, parents will be charged for a replacement, which is £10 for the first replacement. Children can have three replacements in any scheme year at a cost of £10 each before parents have to re-apply to the scheme and pay the original application fee.

For any additional information which may not be included in the information provided on the website listed above, please email youngpersonstravelpass@kent.gov.uk

Children living outside of Kent

If parents pay their council tax to another council other than Kent, they must apply to their own Local Authority (LA) for help with transport even if their child is attending a Kent school.

East Sussex County Council,
Education Department, County Hall,
St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1SG

Telephone: **0345 6080190**

London Borough of Bexley,
Education Department,
Hillview, Hillview Drive, Welling, Kent DA16 3RY

Telephone: **020 8303 7777**

London Borough of Bromley,
Education Department,
Stockwell Close, The Civic Centre, Kent BR1 3UH

Telephone: **020 8464 3333**

Medway Council,
Children's Services,
Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR

Telephone: **01634 331110**

Surrey County Council,
County Hall, Penrhyn Road,
Kinston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN

Telephone: **08456 009 009**

West Sussex County Council,
Adults and Children,
County Hall North, Chartway
Horsham West Sussex RH12 1XA

Telephone: **01243 777100**

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC)

There is no guarantee that a child who receives an Education, Health and Care plan will receive home to school transport as there is no automatic right to do so. All children will be assessed in accordance with Kent's Transport policy, regardless of whether a child holds a EHC plan or not. Parents must therefore apply for transport using the forms that can be found on the following link

www.kent.gov.uk/schooltransport

Parents should also attach a copy of their child's EHC plan and any further information or evidence that would support their application for transport assistance. This evidence is to support the parent's request for transport where their child's needs may inhibit their ability to walk to and from school or where they cannot access public transport. It is assumed that a child would travel to and from school, accompanied as necessary by a parent or responsible adult.

Parents must apply for home to school transport using the T1A/T1B application and send it to the Transport Eligibility Team with any information that will assist the team in assessing the child's eligibility. This could be a copy of their EHC plan and/or correspondence from the child's Consultant.

If parents have difficulty completing the forms, they should seek support from the Area SEN teams to gather the necessary information which will allow the applications to be assessed fully.

The child's address will normally be the one that they spend the most school nights at and any transport arrangements from the alternative address would be the responsibility of the parent to arrange.

If the child is transferring to primary or secondary school for the first time, the applications must be received in this office no later than **15 March**. If the application is received after this date, whilst every effort will be made to issue a pass for a child for the first day of term, until transport is set up, it will be parents/carers responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for their child to attend school.

For children with SEN and/or disabilities, journeys may be more complex and a shorter journey time, although desirable, may not always be possible, however, best practice suggests that the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age is 45 minutes. For secondary school children, the length of journey should not be greater than 75mins.

Personal Transport Budgets

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is available to children with an EHC plan and who have been assessed as eligible to receive home to school transport. It is granted at the discretion of the Local Authority

The PTB is a payment designed to help parents make any arrangements needed, and can be used in any way to facilitate their child's access to school. It is paid over 11 months directly in to a parent's bank account and is based on proximity and bears no relationship to the cost of a taxi or hired vehicle.

To ask to be considered for a PTB, parents should indicate on their application in the box provided or apply online using the link below. Further information on the budget can also be found on this link.

www.kent.gov.uk/personaltransportbudget

Independent Travel Training

Independent travel training helps young people with special educational needs to travel independently to school or college. Being able to access public transport provides important life skills for students.

It will help students make their own decisions about how they live and what they want to achieve, develop an important skill for life and open up educational, social and employment opportunities.

Young people are trained to travel safely from home to school/college and from school/college to home therefore promoting their independence. The training aims to provide the skills and knowledge that is needed to be able to complete journeys safely, confidently and successfully.

The training is available for all age groups who meet the eligibility criteria for transport assistance and who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHC) or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA). The training and support is delivered on a 1:1 basis and is tailored and delivered at the pace suitable for the young person.

The young person is allocated a travel trainer, who will work with the young person until they feel confident and then will carry out a final assessment. On 'sign off' the young person will be issued a bus pass (or train pass if this is the appropriate route) for the remainder of the academic year.

Parents can apply online for their child to be considered for Independent Travel Training by following the link below

www.kent.gov.uk/independenttraveltraining
Alternatively parents can email the team at ITT@kent.gov.uk for further information.

For further information, please go to:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/schooltransport>

To speak to your SEN Caseworker, please contact the Area Office that covers the area where you live.

Districts of Canterbury, Thanet and Swale
East Kent SEN Team,
Brook House,
Reeves Way,
John Wilson Business Park
Chestfield,
Whitstable, Kent CT5 3SS

Telephone: **03000 421160**
Email: SEN.resources-east@kent.gov.uk

Districts of Ashford, Dover and Shepway
South Kent SEN Team,
Kroner House,
Eurogate Business Park
Ashford, Kent TN24 8XU

Telephone: **03000 420889**
Email: SEN.resources-mid@kent.gov.uk

Districts of Dartford, Gravesham and Sevenoaks
North Kent SEN Team,
Joynes House,
1-4 New Road,
Gravesend, Kent DA11 0AT (as from 2015)

Currently at
Sessions House,
County Hall,
Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ

Telephone: **03000 419345**
Email: AEN.resources-west@kent.gov.uk

Districts of Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling
West Kent SEN Team,
Worrall House,
30 Kings Hill Avenue,
Kings Hill
West Malling, Kent ME19 4AE

Telephone: **03000 420997**
Email: AEN.resources-west@kent.gov.uk

Transport for young adults (aged 16 and over)

Kent 16+ Travel Card

The Kent 16+ Travel Card is a discretionary scheme provided by Kent County Council to support students aged 16 – 19 and who are in fulltime education or undertaking work based learning or an apprenticeship. The scheme offers free bus travel on any bus in Kent and can be secured through their learning provider. The normal cost of the pass is £400 per annum but learning providers are encouraged to use Bursary Funding that they receive for students to subsidise the cost of the pass.

The criteria to apply for a Kent 16+ Travel Card are

- the student must be over 16.
- live in a house that pays Council Tax to a Kent council
- attend a recognised school, college or work-based learning provider.

The pass will be available to schools and colleges and training providers for an annual fee of £400. Many institutions are offering staggered payments but parents will need to check with their child's preferred school or college to understand the available support with payments.

The cost can be further subsidised by the education and training providers for their registered students and they may choose to use Bursary Funding for this. The changes in government funding will mean that students will buy the passes directly from the education providers but it is expected that schools and colleges, who will have benefited from the government's new 16-19 Bursary scheme, can use elements of this funding for low income families to further support the cost of their students' travel.

If bus travel is not the most appropriate form of transport for a learner, the learning provider may facilitate alternative support if it wishes.

Any learner in education or training who is not eligible for a contribution from their provider or employer is

expected to pay the full cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Card at £400. KCC provides no direct support with transport assistance for Post 16 learners, other than in exceptional circumstances and where there is a statutory duty to do so. This is normally in relation to a learner's special educational needs.

If the student is in the care of Kent County Council or a recent care leaver, the student can apply for a Young Persons Travel Pass, which is free to all children in care aged between 16 – 21 years. The application form will need to be endorsed by the student's case worker confirming that they are in care until the age of 16 and for students aged 17 and over, the endorsement can be made by Catch 22 (formerly known as Rainer Kent Services). Further information on the pass can be found on the following link

www.kent.gov.uk/youngpersonstravelpass.

If parents feel their child qualifies for assistance because of their exceptional circumstances, they may write to the Head of Fair Access for further consideration. It will be for learning providers to determine the level of subsidy they wish to introduce, however KCC recommends that providers model their support structures based upon the guidance set out below:

Eligibility criteria for financial support

- A learner whose family income is not more than £16,190 who is on Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Child Credit, but not Working Tax Credit; it is recommended that they pay no more than 50% for the Pass.
- A learner whose family income is between £16,190 and £20,818; it is recommended that they may receive a learning-provider contribution to the cost of the Pass, at a level set by the learning provider. This is to be in addition to the KCC subsidy.

For example, learners may benefit from a further subsidy payable by, and at the discretion of, their learning provider, reducing the cost to the learner of their Pass.

c) A learner whose family income is above £20,818, it is recommended that they pay the full cost.

d) Where a 16-19 year old apprentice falls outside these criteria, but can demonstrate hardship caused by travel-to-learn and travel-to-work pressures, then they can be treated as category (b) above. Training providers and employers should be approached for additional funding support.

e) All eligible learners must demonstrate to their institutions that they have a genuine travel-to-learn need.

f) While the learning-provider funding or employer funding that could be used to further subsidise each Pass is entirely discretionary, the guidance in (a) to (e) above is designed to assist in ensuring a standard level of subsidy for all learners in Kent.

Parents can buy travel cards to cover part of the academic year. The cost is based on when the application is received.

- Term 1 card (starts 5 September 2016) **£400**
- Term 2 card (starts 31 October 2016) **£340**

- Term 3 card (starts 3 January 2017) **£280**
- Term 4 card (starts 20 February 2017) **£210**
- Term 5 card (starts 17 April 2017) **£140**
- Term 6 card (starts 5 June 2017) **£70**

To access the Kent 16+ Travel Card parents should contact their child's school, college or training provider and ask for more information.

Or go to: www.kent.gov.uk/kent16plustravelcard

You can also email kent16plustravelcard@kent.gov.uk

SEN 16+ students attending school, college or work based learning providers

SEN students who are transferring onto further education and will have received a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) Plan or an Education Health Care Plan (EHC) following the end of their statement, must in the first instance, apply directly to Kent County Council for a Kent 16+ Travel Card.

For further information, please go to **www.kent.gov.uk** and view the Getting to School SEN webpage.

However, if the students needs are such that it inhibits their ability to walk to and from their place of learning or they are unable to access public transport, then parents or carers can apply for transport through the Local Authority completing the AW3 application form. This should be sent to the Transport Eligibility Team at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XQ who will assess the application in accordance with Kent's transport policy. SEN learners, like mainstream learners, will need to attend their nearest school or college offering the learning or courses required in order to be eligible to receive transport and live the statutory distance from their school or college.

The Local Authority will assess the student's application and if the student is eligible to receive transport assistance, there are several options that can be considered:

1. The Local Authority may also consider (with the school/college's recommendation and the parents' approval) Independent Travel Training.
2. The Local Authority may consider granting a student a Personal Transport Budget at its discretion. Parents can apply online to be considered for a PTB. The payment is provided to parents to use any way they see fit, which will enable them to get their child to and from school (e.g. to pay for childcare for a younger sibling whilst taking the older child to school personally). It is paid directly into a parent's bank account each month over 11 months (no payment is received in August due to the holidays).

For further information on this scheme, please follow the link below.

www.kent.gov.uk/personaltransportbudgets

Alternatively parents can email:

personaltransportbudgets@kent.gov.uk

3. The Local Authority may consider the direct provision of transport where there is a particular need and/or disability.

Transport related responsibilities

Parents responsibilities

As a minimum, parents are expected:

1. To ensure child is taken to the appropriate drop off or collection points, these may be bus stops/train stations etc for journeys to and from the school.
2. Should the mode of transport be a taxi, to ensure that a responsible adult or parent is at home or a defined collection point to place the child into the vehicle and to be available upon their return from school.
3. To make own transport arrangements should a child finish school early before the normal departure time.
4. To make own transport arrangements should a child stay at breakfast clubs or after school club.
5. To make own transport arrangements for transport if a child is on work experience.
6. To make own transport arrangements for transport if a visiting relative or foreign student stays with the family.
7. To ensure sufficient notice is provided to the Transport Eligibility Team to reassess their child's eligibility and to receive transport if the family move home or child changes schools.
8. To make own transport arrangements for transport if the family should move or the child change schools until the reassessment of the child's eligibility has been undertaken by Transport Eligibility Officer.
9. Should the mode of transport be a taxi, to contact the operator when advised which company will be collecting/dropping off your child to make the necessary arrangements.

If the child is eligible to receive transport, parents are responsible for making their own arrangements until such time as the transport is arranged.

Fair Access - Transport Eligibility Team

Rm 2.24, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Responsibilities include:

1. Assess transport applications in accordance with Kent County Council's transport policies.
2. Provide publications with appropriate information for parents to be aware of eligibility criteria and on how to apply for transport assistance.
3. Advise parents of the decision to grant or refuse transport assistance and the reason why.
4. Assess the route taken between a child's home and a school against Kent County Council's guidelines.
5. Arrange and reassess any review of transport assistance made under the Low Income criteria and the appropriate mainstream or SEN Home to College policies.
6. Assess a child's eligibility with an EHC Plan to receive a Personal Transport Budget.
7. Provide Independent Travel Training to children/ students who are eligible and who are able to be trained to use public transport.
8. Process appeals for parents who are in dispute with a decision refusing their child transport assistance.
9. Remove transport assistance in the event of reports of misbehavior on transport.
10. Inform parents on the outcome of those investigations and the sanctions taken to address the behaviour.

School transport and the environment

Public Transport

Aylesford Highways Depot, St Michael's Close
Aylesford, Kent ME20 7TZ

Responsibilities include:

1. Plan and procure hired transport.
2. Negotiate contracts and ticket discount prices for the bulk purchase of season tickets from commercial public transport.
3. Arrange retender of existing contracts.
4. Undertake regular surveys of children carried on school transport services.
5. Undertake regular checks on vehicle provision and time keeping.
6. Maintain a record of licensed and approved operators for use as transport contractors.
7. Maintain records of insurance for approved operators and police checks for their staff.
8. Receive approved transport applications from Admissions & Transport and to determine the mode of transport and allocate children to the appropriate route.
9. Advise parents of their child's transport arrangements.
10. Order/issue appropriate passes.
11. Investigate complaints from parents regarding operational issues.
12. Investigate reports of misconduct with operators and schools and report back to The Transport Eligibility Team.
13. Obtain from operators reports of accident or damage and to forward any letters or claims to the Insurance Section.
14. Manage parents claims for Cash Allowance.
15. Determine mode of transport and allocate children to routes under the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme.
16. Undertake regular reviews of the transport network ensuring the services are efficient and the best value for money.

Using some of the ideas explained below, parents and their children can help to tackle congestion on the school-run and help to create a cleaner, greener, healthier school and community.

Walk to school

KCC enjoys a unique partnership with Medway Council and the Kent and Medway Charity Team in promoting and encouraging walking to school. The Charity organises a range of activities to help the charitable sector with its fundraising and supports initiatives to promote health and wellbeing, particularly amongst primary school children. The charity works in partnership with the KM Group, Kent's biggest media organisation. Parents can find more information about Walking Buses and walk to school incentive schemes on the charities website at www.kmwalktoschool.co.uk

Even if parents and children can't walk to school every day or live too far away, they could consider walking just once a week or 'park and stride' by parking a short distance from the school and walking the last bit of the journey.

Cycle to school

Cycle training is a very important way to increase confidence and safety. We deliver Bikeability, the National Standard Cycle Training. There are 3 levels of training that aim to give people the skills and confidence to ride their bikes on today's roads. We deliver Level 1 and 2 training to primary schools. In addition, we deliver Level 3 training to secondary school children. Bikeability will either be provided by KCC, or if the school is part of a School Games Organisation, training will be arranged via School Games Organisers (SGOs). We are working with SGOs to make sure every year 6 child has access to level 2 training.

Children will need to:

- be at least 10 years old for level 2 training
- be able to ride their bike
- have an appropriate cycle helmet
- have a bike that is roadworthy.

Level 1 and 2 training costs £10 per student with KCC. However, this may vary in some schools because they are part of a School Games Organisation. Level 3 training with KCC is £5 per student.

For more information including how to book please go to: www.kent.gov.uk/bikeability.

We are working hard to improve cycle routes across the county. For information about cycle routes in your area visit: www.kent.gov.uk/cycling. Printed maps are available for some locations and can be found in libraries, Gateways and Tourist Information Centres.

Public transport

Buses and trains may prove to be a good option for some pupils. For information about available services in your area, together with discounted tickets and incentive schemes visit: www.kent.gov.uk/publictransport

Car sharing/buddy scheme

Parents can reduce the cost and time involved in the school-run by sharing cars with friends and neighbours. They can find out more about sharing cars in Kent on the website www.kentjourneyshare.com, or ask their chosen school if they can match them with parents travelling from the same area. If half of UK motorists received a lift one day a week, congestion and pollution would be reduced by 10%.

Responsible parking

Inconsiderate parking and manoeuvring in the vicinity of school entrances can present a significant safety hazard. Parents should support their school, other road users and local residents by avoiding parking on 'Keep-Clear' markings and, where possible, park or drop-off a safe distance from the school and encourage pupils to walk to the school gates.

KCC work with schools, Kent Police and Local Civil Enforcement teams to take action against inconsiderate and dangerous parking. For further details and access to our online toolkit and resources please go to: www.responsibleparking.co.uk

Home to School Transport Appeals

Procedure

Parents are entitled to appeal against decisions by the County Council refusing their application for free or subsidised transport for their child to a school maintained by Kent County Council or to an Academy or Free School in Kent.

In order to appeal parents must put all the reasons which support their appeal in writing and send it to the

Transport Appeals Team, Democratic Services
Room 1.99, Sessions House, County Hall
Maidstone, ME14 1XQ.

Or email appeals@kent.gov.uk

Grounds for appealing

Parents can appeal for any reason or combinations of reasons that they wish. The Members of the County Council's Regulation Committee Appeal Panel ("the Members") will consider any arguments that are put to them.

In the letter of appeal, parents must include:

- reasons for appealing
- parents full name and address
- contact telephone number and if possible an email address
- their child's name and date of birth,
- the name of the school to which parents would like free/subsidised transport to
- all evidence that supports their appeal. (For example letters from doctors, social workers and schools).

If parents are appealing because they are on a low income and have been refused transport to a church school, they may wish to provide evidence with their appeal letter that they hold that religious or philosophical belief (for example a supporting letter from a priest, vicar or cleric.

There is no charge to parents for the appeal but they must meet any costs they incur for preparing their appeal or attending the hearing, such as photocopying or transport costs.

Once the appeal has been received by the Transport Appeals Team in Democratic Services, parents/carers will receive an acknowledgement in writing.

The Appeals Team will then offer a date and time to hear the appeal. If parents wish to, they can, for a good reason, reject the first hearing date. If the second hearing date is also rejected or if parents/carers fail to attend a hearing on a date that has been accepted they will not, except in exceptional circumstances, be offered a further hearing. The Members will, however, consider the appeal in their absence, based upon the information that has been provided in writing. Please note that it is not possible to hold appeals in the evenings or at the weekend.

At least 5 days before the hearing date, the Appeals Team will send parents and the Officer presenting the Council's case a copy of each other's written case and supporting documentation.

Witnesses

Parents are welcome to bring a witness, but they must advise the Transport Appeals team at least one day in advance who this will be. Parents may wish to provide a written summary of the witnesses' evidence on the day of the hearing as this may be helpful to the Members considering the case.

Please note that the Members hearing the appeal have the right to refuse to listen to witnesses produced by parents or by the Officer presenting the Council's case if they believe that the evidence given is irrelevant to the appeal.

No fees, expenses or allowances will be paid to the witnesses by the Council under any circumstances.

Parents can have a friend to accompany them or represent them at the appeal and must provide the

Appeals Team with his or her identity at least 1 day prior to the hearing date. If the friend is a lawyer, they cannot act as one as part of a lawyer/client relationship.

Legal presentation is not allowed and the Officer presenting the case on behalf of the County Council will also not be allowed to have legal representation. The Members deciding your appeal does have the right to have a legal adviser if they so wish.

There will be an official note taker at the hearing provided by the Council and any video or attempt by parents to record the hearing will lead to its immediate termination and the dismissal of the appeal.

As far as possible parents should send all evidence with their appeal letter. Any additional evidence should be sent to the Transport Appeals team at least 2 days before the appeal hearing. Written evidence produced on the day of the appeal hearing will be considered at the absolute discretion of the Members hearing the appeal and may lead to the hearing being adjourned to a later date.

The appeal hearing

There will normally be a panel of between 3 - 5 Members considering the appeal. There will also be a clerk to advise Members and take notes of the appeal hearing. At the beginning of the appeal hearing the Chairman elected by the Members will introduce everyone present at the hearing and explain the procedure. The procedure is as follows:

1. A Presenting Officer will explain the reasons that have prevented the County Council meeting parents wishes up to this stage.
2. Parents and the Members may then ask the Officer questions.
3. Parents and/or their representative (who can be a Member of the County Council) will explain the grounds of the appeal and its desired outcome.
4. The Presenting Officer and the Members will ask parents and/or their representative questions.
5. The Presenting Officer is asked to summarise the case for the Council.

6. Parents and/or their representative will then be asked to summarise the grounds of the appeal.
7. Parents and the Presenting Officer will be asked to leave the room and the Members will make a decision.

The Members may ask anyone questions at any time or may alter the order of steps 3 and 4 at any time. Members may agree to consider only written evidence for either or both parties.

The decision

In reaching their decision the Members must have regard to the County Council's policy on Home to School Transport. They will need to satisfy themselves that the policy has been applied correctly. They will then look at the specific circumstances to determine whether they are sufficiently strong to enable them to use their discretion to make an exception. The Members have a responsibility to consider the most cost effective and appropriate mode of home to school transport taking into account the family circumstances at the time of the appeal.

The Members may decide to:

- uphold the appeal in all respects **or**
- not uphold the appeal **or**
- they may decide to partially uphold the appeal.

This can include meeting parent's wishes in part or for a time limited period. At the end of the time limited period the Members can review the circumstances again and may ask that additional information such as up to date medical records or school attendance records be made available at the time of the review.

Parents will receive a decision in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. Decisions cannot be given over the telephone.

There is no further appeal within the Council's procedures. If parents believe that they have suffered

injustice as a result of maladministration by the Panel then they do have the right to pursue a complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman.

This is not a right of appeal and relates only to issues such as failure to follow correct procedures, or failure to act independently and fairly. If the person making the complaint simply disagrees with the decision there is no recourse. If parents have a complaint of a procedural nature, they should refer it direct to the:

Local Government Ombudsman,
PO BOX 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH.

Advice on Lo-Call: 0845 6021983

Parents will not be able to make any further applications for free or subsidised transport in relation to the same child at the same school unless:

- they can demonstrate a significant and material change in circumstances since the previous appeal was decided; **or**
- the County Council changes the criteria for offering free or subsidised transport under the Council's published Home to School Transport Policy and that change is relevant to the case; **or**
- there is a relevant change to the law.

If any of the above grounds apply parents will need to write a fresh appeal to the Transport Appeals Team below, setting out the reasons in detail. Parents will then be informed whether the Council will be prepared to consider the new application.

Transport Appeals Team,
Democratic Services, Room 1.99, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone,
ME14 1XQ

There is no appeal against this decision under the Council's policy. For any further information, please go to www.kent.gov.uk/schooltransport

Code of conduct for students when travelling

Many thousands of pupils and students in Kent will receive transport or help with travel costs from Kent County Council each year. Many of them will travel on public transport services and will therefore travel with large numbers of other young people, as well as members of the general public.

There is a responsibility on students to behave appropriately whilst travelling. Where any behaviour falls short of the required standards, the Council has mechanisms to work with parents, school and transport providers to rectify problems and it retains the right to suspend or remove transport or passes where this is deemed appropriate.

It is the responsibility of students to:

- Arrive for their transport on time and with a valid travel pass for travel
- Behave in a safe and responsible way at all times
- Get on the first available vehicle they have a valid pass for
- Show their passes to the driver or other officials when asked
- Follow all instructions from the driver, inspector or other official at all times especially in an emergency
- Wear seatbelts at all times (if they are fitted); and
- Get off safely at the right stop and cross roads carefully.

The following behaviour is not acceptable and if reported, parents will be contacted by the Local Authority as to the appropriate action that will be taken.

Nuisance or offensive behaviour

(Category 1)

This includes irritating and unpleasant behaviour which, whilst not necessarily a threat to safety, may impair the comfort of others. Such behaviour includes:

- Failing to respond to the driver or inspector appropriately. For example, not showing a valid travel pass.
- Eating or drinking on the vehicle
- Smoking
- Spitting
- Using bad or abusive language
- Making excessive noise
- Placing feet on the seats of the vehicle.

Dangerous behaviour

(Category 2)

This includes behaviour which may present some potential or actual threat to the physical safety of the child and others and includes:

- Standing on the vehicle steps or in the doorway
- Leaning out of the window or door
- Harassing or verbally abusing other passengers or the driver
- Bullying
- Running around inside the vehicle or climbing on the seats.

Destructive or very dangerous behaviour

(Category 3)

This category includes behaviour which causes or has the potential to cause physical injury to others and damage to the vehicle and includes:

- Fighting
- Threatening physical violence
- Breaking windows
- Interfering with the opening of the doors or emergency exits
- Causing graffiti including scratching glass
- Spraying aerosols
- Damage to seats, seatbelts or other equipment.

Extremely dangerous or life threatening behaviour

This category includes behaviour which is likely to cause serious injury to others and includes:

- Physical assault on the driver or other passengers
- Lighting fires including igniting aerosols
- Threatening physical violence with a dangerous weapon
- Interfering with the vehicle controls.

A full copy of the Council's Code of Conduct for Transport is available on the website.

