

Briefing Paper for Chief Officer Decision.

Purpose: For Decision



Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is to approve the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2020, following public consultation.

BACKGROUND

2. Statutory guidance from the Department for Education on post-16 transport to education and training requires local authorities to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement each year specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport for persons of sixth form age in education or training. This was re-issued in January 2019 and recommended a particular format for the policy statement which was adopted for the Council's statement last year.
3. Isle of Wight Council and its post-16 providers are committed to ensuring transport is available to enable students to access education and training as set out in the policy statement. The support is provided either by the Council or post-16 providers.
4. There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school or college transport once a student is over 16. The Council has considered its resources and the travel to college opportunities for students. Students can attend a college of choice and, if needed, apply to their college's student support for assistance.
5. The Council does offer, under discretionary powers, a transport service to enable 16+ students with a Learning Difficulty or Disability (usually with an Education, Health and Care Plan) to access a place that is the closest suitable provision for their needs.
6. Students from low-income families, in care, or care leavers may be eligible for a yearly bursary through the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund from the Education Funding Agency. Students and their families apply for the bursary directly through their chosen college/post-16 provider.
7. Statutory guidance clarifies the duty to consult with stakeholders in developing the statement before publication.
8. The IoW college school sixth forms and post-16 training providers also provide travel information for learners. Southern Vectis bus company provide a variety of reduced fare options for young people and students.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

9. The policy statement fits within the Council's commitment to the Outcome in the 2017-2020 Corporate Plan that "All young people will have the best start in life so that they can fill their potential," It supports students with learning difficulty or disability to continue into post 16 training or education.

CONSULTATION

10. The public consultation, which invited comments on the 2020 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement ran from 7 April 2020 to 19 May 2020. The Council proposed that the existing policy was rolled forward without change to apply for the coming academic year.
11. Over the consultation period, the Council wrote to its secondary schools and Isle of Wight College. Three responses were received. The first stated "My only comments would be that I think for students who are travelling across the Island to go to 6th Form or other placements there ought to be a scheme to support them with travel costs. With the raised participation age it is not really optional to stay in education and this should be encouraged with a travel bursary for students having to use public transport to travel over a certain distance." The second supported the proposal.
12. An extended reply was provided by the College without comments on the content of the policy but asking for clarification on application of the policy and the types of service provided. These have been followed up directly.
13. All Post-16 settings receive a bursary fund, from central government, that can be used to support students facing hardship. It is appropriate for this to be used to support transport costs.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

14. There is an existing cost of £217,300 to the Council associated with providing a transport service for those students with a learning difficulty or disability. This is in line with the allocated budget. No substantive changes have been proposed to the policy and so 2020/21 costs are expected to be broadly in line with current figures as, although student numbers may vary slightly, a similar number of vehicles will be required to transport the students to and home from their provider. The number of Post-19 students requiring transport is also under regular review.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy. The policy must be published on the authority's website by 31 May each year.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

16. The Council, as a public body, is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are; age, disability, gender

reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. No issues arose last year during the application of the policy. Those with a disability are supported by the policy. No adverse impact in regard to race, culture, gender, or disability arising from this report has been identified.

OPTIONS

1. To approve the proposed 2020 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement as set out in Appendix A.
2. Not to approve the proposed 2020 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement as set out in Appendix A.

RISK MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

17. The action being taken is to approve an annual policy statement which in turn goes on to be published in line with the Council's statutory duty. In approving the plan there is no risk as it ensures that the Council complies with its legal duty requirement to compile, approve and publish a statement. If the statement is not approved the Council would not be compliant and officers would have no basis on which to consider any requests from families seeking transport for a post 16 student in their family. Without the policy restricting the offer to its current service would be difficult and additional costs would likely occur.

The proposed policy statement maintains the Council's current offer for post-16 students and ensures that the Council have met their statutory duty to consult on, compile, approve and publish the annual statement. The statement has undergone the required consultation process inviting comment from stakeholders on the following:

- Any comment on the 2020 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement
- Any post-16 travel issues in the stakeholder's respective area.

RECOMMENDATION

18. To approve the proposed 2020 Post-16 Transport Policy Statement as set out in Appendix A.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

19. Appendix A – Post 16 Transport Statement

Dated this day of 2020

STEVE CROCKER – Director of children’s Services

Signed 

In consultation with and approved
by Cllr Paul Brading

Signed..... 

Appendix A

POST-16 TRANSPORT STATEMENT

For implementation from September 2020

Contents

Page

1. Document information
2. Contents and Explanatory Notes
3. Post 16 Students in Sixth Forms and Further Education
4. Transition: children entitled under the previous policy
5. Comments / Complaints
6. Appendix 1 – Administrative and operational arrangements

1. Document Information

Title:	Post-16 Transport Statement
Status:	Approved
Current version:	1
Author:	Martin Goff ✉ school.admissions@iow.gov.uk
Sponsor:	
Consultation:	Spring 2020
Approval by:	
Approval Date:	
Review frequency:	Annual
Next Review:	Not applicable

2. Contents and Explanatory Notes

The Education Act 1996 (as amended) imposes a duty on Local Authorities (LAs) to facilitate the attendance of children at schools and to ensure no parent can have a defence to a prosecution for non-attendance simply because the LA has not made suitable arrangements for transport to and from school. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 created new duties on the IWC to provide free transport for pupils in receipt of free school meals or whose families receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Statutory Guidance has been issued by Central Government, particularly Home-to- School Travel and Transport Guidance (July 2014) and Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training (January 2019) and is used by all LAs to inform policy and provision of the transport service. There is no requirement to extend pre-16 transport services to students in the Post-16 sector. This guidance refers to legislation regarding the provision of transport to Post-16 education and training for young people of sixth form age and legislation regarding the provision of transport to post-19 education and training for those aged 19 to 25 and for whom an EHC plan is maintained. All Local Authorities must publish annually a Post-16 Transport Policy Statement. The IWC statement will be updated each year and published on <http://www.iwight.com/> Isle of Wight Council

3. Post-16 students in sixth forms and further education (16-19 year olds)

1. The IWC provides no free or subsidised transport for post-16 mainstream students in further education.

2. If a post-16 full-time student is allocated a place at St. George's School, by the Local Authority in the student's EHCP, then the following entitlement will apply:

(a) If the school is more than 3 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-school transport.

3. Furthermore, if a post-16 student with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities has been in receipt of particular Home to School transport arrangements due to their EHCP requiring it for their school education (4- 16 year olds), then the presumption is that such arrangements will continue – unless a further assessment of needs is required in relation to the post-16 circumstances.

4. If a post-16 full-time student is a Learner with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities and the school, institution or provider chosen by the student is located more than three miles from the student's home address, the student will be entitled to receive home to education transport subsidised by the Isle of Wight Council up until the age of 24. In drawing up the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for young people between the ages of 16 and 24, the Local Authority will consider the travel needs of the young person. This entitlement can be accessed through a termly bus pass.

5. If a young person (16-19 years old) is not in education, employment or training (NEET), they may be entitled to financial support with travel costs associated with efforts to engage in education, employment or training. Such assistance is made available through travel tokens issued in advance of their travel. These tokens can be used for travel from their home address to the Isle of Wight Council's Island Futures Team or to a Post-16 provider. Travel tokens are available through the Island Futures Team, County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight or by calling them on 01983 823888.

4. Transition: children entitled under the previous policy

Any pupil entitled under existing discretionary provision and currently receiving discretionary transport, will continue to receive the same service until the end of their current phase of schooling, providing they are completing the same course and there are no change of circumstances (e.g. change of address or school). If circumstances do change then the new policy will apply.

5. Comments / Complaints

If you want to make comments or complain about the Home-to-School service you have received, you can write to us at: School Admissions and Transport Team, Isle of Wight Council, County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1UD or alternatively you can telephone us on 01983 823455.

Appendix 1

Administrative and operational arrangements: Frequently Asked Questions

Where transport is provided to special schools, are specially adapted vehicles provided?

Yes, with the following provisions:

- All buses are fitted with seat belts
- Booster seats are provided when required
- All buses have at least one escort on board
- All drivers and escorts operate the same route daily
- All vehicles have ramps accessible from the kerb-side for wheelchair travellers.
- Escorts and drivers receive appropriate training in lifting and basic first aid
- All vehicles are issued with mobile phones for use by the escort so help can be summoned in an emergency.

Behaviour

What happens when pupils misbehave on school transport

The Authority has a procedure for dealing with children who misbehave on school transport. If the term ticket held by a pupil is in any way discretionary, e.g. post-16 or Spare Seat, then withdrawal of the ticket and the requiring of alternative transport arrangements to be made could be a reasonable course of action to take following consultation with the school. Such alternative transport could be at the expense of the pupil or their parents.

Alternative Arrangements

Will I be provided with independent travel training if I face difficulty with transport?

The Local Authority (LA) encourages local education providers to support independent travel training for young people aged 16-19 as part of the curriculum. St. George's School and the IW College have trained staff that can offer this service to their students. If the student is eligible for Transport and meets the criteria, this will be included in their Education, Health and Care Plan.

Are there any travel concessionary tickets available for Post-16 students on local bus services on the island?

Southern Vectis offer variable discounts on their multiday/period tickets for students aged 16-19. For further details please see the Southern Vectis website as detailed below:

<https://www.islandbuses.info/>

What help can I apply for if I choose to travel to a Post-16 course that is on the mainland?

The student should contact the establishment that they will be attending to enquire about accessing the Post-16 bursary.

Wightlink Ferries Student Fares allow students who are 16 to 18 years old and in full-time education at a mainland college, can apply for an academic season ticket. For further information please see the Wightlink website as detailed below:

<http://www.wightlink.co.uk/iow/go/tickets-prices/season-tickets/>

Red Funnel Student Saver tickets allow students who are 16 to 18 years old and in full-time education at a mainland college to travel on a reduced ticket rate. Students can apply online at:

<http://www.redfunnel.co.uk/ferry-travel/frequent-travellers/hi-speed-saver-tickets/>
Hovertravel offer a School Academic Year Season Card for students in full-time education travelling across the Solent on a daily basis. Students over 16 years of age can download an application form from the Hovertravel website, as detailed below:

<http://www.hovertravel.co.uk/pages/regular-travel-cards/>

What help is available for me if I attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and I need residential accommodation?

The student should contact the establishment that they will be attending to enquire about accessing the Post-16 Bursary Fund.