Transport policy statement for students aged 16-18 in further education and continuing students aged 19 and over.

Name of Local Authority : SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Department Responsible: ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

1. Please provide details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for students aged 16–19 and who provides them. Please provide details of any costs to the student.

LA
The LA and its partners provide assistance with transport via passes for use on contract or public transport services. To be eligible for subsidised transport the student must be:

- Over compulsory school age but under 19 years (also those completing a course started prior to their 19th birthday)
- Undertaking an approved full-time course of further education study (A full time course is one which involves a minimum of 450 guided hours per year (approximately 12 guided hours per week), as confirmed by the providing school or college).
- Normally resident in Suffolk
- Living at least three miles away from the school or college to be attended. Distances are measured by the nearest available walking route in accordance with the arrangements set out in the Education Act applicable to children of compulsory school age.

To those students who qualify, assistance will be made available to the following establishments:

- The sixth form centre at the school which serves the area where the student lives (the "catchment area" school)
- The local college of further education in Suffolk
- Additionally, transport assistance will be available to those students who undertake an approved full-time course at a school or college of further education other than those that serve the local area, subject to the home-to-school/college journey time not exceeding 75 minutes. ‘Journey Time’ is assessed by calculating the door-to-door time by use of public transport (or the equivalent of a public transport arrangement). This assessment includes any walking time to a pick up point, time gaps in public transport connections, and walking time from set down point to the school or college.

- Full details of the scheme and the arrangements made are to be found in separate information made available to students (see section 10)
- The charge to the student for subsidised transport is £112 per term (2006/2007). PLEASE NOTE: Suffolk County Council does not guarantee that this charge is necessarily the cheapest option where discounts are available on registered public services.
Spare seats are available to students (but only on contract services arranged by the County Council for home-to-school and college purposes) who are not entitled to assistance under the terms of the policy, on a “first come first served basis”. The charge for these spare seats is £112 (2006/2007) per term.

Please note that in this statement about the County Council and its partners scheme of transport assistance for students, the term, “school” refers to a school maintained by the local authority or a foundation school funded from public resources. The policy of travel assistance for sixth form students does not extend to independent schools.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The following schools and colleges offer specific transport assistance to students: 
**Otley College, Otley, Ipswich.** Provide subsidised travel for students not qualifying for assistance under the policy operated by the LEQ and its partners. Using the college’s own vehicles as well as specially contracted vehicles, services are made available from a range of areas including Colchester, Clacton and Manningtree (all in Essex)

**West Suffolk College, Bury St Edmunds.** May assist students who have had a break in Education (and who fall outside the policy operated by the LA and its partners) with the cost of public transport fares.

**Lowestoft College.** Transport help may be provided to students who are not eligible for assistance through the LA managed scheme. This includes those with special needs and mature students. Assistance may be provided through specially hired transport, the use of public transport or, in special circumstances, by the payment of a termly sum as a contribution toward travel costs.

For these colleges, and for other schools and colleges in Suffolk who may be able to provide transport assistance, enquiries should be made directly to the establishment concerned to ascertain the latest information. See Section 10 for contact arrangements.

TRANSPORT OPERATORS

**Explore Card** The County Council offers a 50% discount travel scheme using an Explore Card. Card holders are entitled to a 50% discount on normal adult single and return fares on local registered bus services in Suffolk. This includes journeys that finish in neighbouring counties, and return journeys bought in Suffolk. The Explore card is available to all young people aged 5-19 who are Suffolk residents.

**Ipswich Buses Ltd.** “Bus ID” cards are available to all young travellers over 11 years of age. With this scheme, students, up to their 19th birthday, who are in full time education in Ipswich (including the College at Otley), are allowed to travel at the child fare at any time on any day on all Ipswich Buses town services and on some other services they operate in the Ipswich area. The “Bus ID” card costs £2 – application form and further details available from the bus company. The company also offer general concessions through weekly, termly and monthly travel passes. Further information available from the company. Details shown in Section 10.
First Eastern Counties Ltd. This company operate many of the inter-urban public bus services in Suffolk. The company may offer a specific range of concessions to young people including weekly, termly and monthly travel passes. Further information available from the company. Details shown in Section 10.

Other Public Transport Operators. May offer concessions, on their commercial services and on those sponsored by the County Council, to young people travelling to and from school or college. Further information from those companies. Details shown in Section 10.

Suffolk Saver. District and Borough Councils throughout Suffolk work together to provide the Suffolk Countywide Concessionary Fares Scheme – known as Suffolk Saver. A half fare Suffolk Saver is available free of charge to all eligible people for travel on all local bus services where the journey starts or finishes in Suffolk. Those eligible for the half fare saver include those who are disabled. Additional help is available to those who are blind – they are entitled to a pass that allows free travel. Full details available from the local District or Borough Council. More detail in Section 10.

2. During what times during the day can students use their travel pass or obtain concessionary fares?

LA
Much of the transport arranged for students involves the use of special contract services. In such cases, each route is served by a vehicle travelling to and from the school or college only at times to coincide with the start and end of the standard school or college day. For those who are provided with passes for use on public transport services some greater flexibility may be available.

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND TRANSPORT OPERATORS
Details of the times when travel passes can be used or when other concessions apply are available from the establishment or transport operator concerned. More detail in Section 10.

3. Please confirm that support will continue to be made available to students who reach 19 whilst continuing on a course.

Subsidised transport is available for students who are under 19 years of age or, who started a course before the age of 19 years and who meet the criteria set out in Section 1.

4. How will students be assessed to see if they are eligible for support? eg, means testing or must they be on benefits?

See also Section 1 for all the eligibility criteria.
Students need to complete an application form including home address and course details. The LA determines eligibility for transport assistance based on the information provided (seeking advice from Connexions and other partners where necessary regarding career outcomes). Once eligibility has been established from the initial application and the first travel pass has been issued the student need to nothing further. Each term during the
whole of the course a reminder invoice will be sent which will offer the opportunity to continue with the transport next term. Exemption from the subsidised transport charges will NOT be available to students aged 16-19 who are being assisted by the County Council and its partners under the policy described in this statement. The reason for that is because Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA’s) became available to students nationally from September 2004 and the level of payment is on a sliding scale based on the income of the student’s family – the highest allowances being available to students whose family have the lower incomes. In the guidance provided by DfES in connection with 16-19 years transport support arrangements for the coming year, it is made clear that students are expected to contribute a reasonable proportion of their EMA towards transport costs.

5. What help do you provide for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those facing other difficulties in following their courses?

Transport for students at Special schools and for other students with special educational needs may be provided irrespective of the minimum distance and other criteria set out in this policy, where it is accepted by the County Council that transport is necessary to enable them to have access to the education they require. For students undertaking a course at a sixth form this might be through a Statement of Special Educational Needs made while the student was of compulsory school age and which continues to be maintained. In other cases the advice about transport needs may also come from connexions, Social care, schools or other agencies. The general policy contained in this statement provides transport assistance for students who are 16-19 years. However, for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, transport assistance may be provided to students who begin a course after they reach the age of 19 years. In such cases assistance through the arrangements agreed by the county Council and its partners and set out in this statement would continue until the student is 21 years of age. A student who begins a course between the ages of 21 and 24 inclusive, or who is continuing a course started before the age of 21, may seek assistance with transport costs through arrangements agreed with the Learning Skills Council who will be working with the county Council and its other partners. Support from the LSC will stop at the end of the academic year in which the student reaches the age of 25.

6. Do you provide mobility/independence training for students who face difficulty with transport?

No

7. When should students start to apply for transport support?

Students should ask about help with transport as soon as they know what course they intend to undertake. It is not necessary for a student to wait for formal acceptance on a course before applying. Information about transport and forms on which to apply for transport assistance are available at schools and colleges in Suffolk and from the Passenger Transport Unit – the contact details are shown in
Section 10. In all cases application forms need to be returned to the Passenger Transport Unit.

8. What help can students apply for if they need to travel to a course that is beyond your LA area?

Students living in Suffolk are entitled to transport assistance to establishments outside the Suffolk LA boundaries, providing they meet the criteria set out in Section 1.

9. What help is available for students who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to stay away?

Such cases will be considered on an individual basis as they arise.

10. Please provide information about all points of contact for students seeking transport support, e.g., LA/college, bus company contact. Please include any websites and e-mail addresses.

Information on ALL aspects of the policy and other arrangements described in this statement and details about points of contact can be found on the Suffolk County council web-site:

www.suffolkcc.gov.uk

This comprehensive site provides details of all schools and colleges and contact details for the LA (including area education offices), Connexions Suffolk, other local authorities in Suffolk and transport operators – and where appropriate has direct links to the external web sites of those establishments, organisations and transport companies. The County Council also produces annually a booklet “Schools in Suffolk – A Parents’ Guide” which provides detailed information about education in Suffolk and also provides contact points for all schools and colleges. This booklet is available from area education offices in the county and from individual schools. It can be accessed through the Suffolk County Council Web site.

Alternatively, information about the County Council’s school and college transport policy, details of other points of contact as well as application forms for transport assistance for students can be made available by the County Council’s Passenger Transport Unit:

Suffolk County Council  
Passenger Transport Unit  
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road  
Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2BX  
Phone: 01473 265064 Fax: 01473 216884  
E-mail: education.transport@educ.suffolkccc.gov.uk