

Isle of Wight Council
HOME-TO-EDUCATION
TRANSPORT POLICY
For implementation from
September 2013
including transitional arrangements

1 Document Information

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3 INTRODUCTION

This document explains in detail the policies and arrangements for free and subsidised transport for pupils and students who attend the following types of education institutions and training providers on the Isle of Wight which are funded by the taxpayer. **(NB: this policy applies to students resident on the island; for those students living on the mainland and wishing to attend education on the Island appropriate costs will be covered by their home authority).**

- **Primary schools (4-11 age range)**
 - community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation and academy schools;
- **Secondary schools (11-16 age range)**
 - Voluntary aided, trust and academy schools, some of which are called colleges.;
- **Post-16 institutions and providers (16-19 age range)**
 - Sixth forms within the secondary school types listed above, and the IW College and training providers.
- **Special schools and Units**
 - Maintained special schools, Pupil Referral Units and school based units

This document covers all aspects of education transport, ranging from home-to-education transport to special arrangements which may apply to small groups of pupils or students only. It seeks to provide a comprehensive approach to all home-to-education transport, including post-16 arrangements.

Parents are provided with general information on transport in the Isle of Wight Council's two admissions booklets which are entitled "Educating your child". One relates to primary schools; the other to secondary schools. This document should be read in conjunction with the admissions booklets.

Previous versions of this policy have provided a detailed breakdown of which transport provision the Isle of Wight Council is obliged, by law, to provide – and that which it does at its local discretion. Whilst this document does indicate (in appendix 2) which provision exists over and above the statutory minimum which needs to be provided, it seeks within the main sections to present the current arrangements in a user friendly format for parents – therefore assisting them in expressing informed preferences when choosing a school or institution for their child. The comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) section (in appendix 1) seeks to address any particular issues and queries which parents may have in relation to the detail and application of the policies set out in this document.

Parents, pupils and students should turn to the relevant parts of this document to identify what entitlement would exist for them within the policies as set out. It should be noted that these policies may be subject to review on future occasions and furthermore that the application of these policies at the time of entering a school or institution does not offer any kind of guarantee or commitment that such provision will continue to exist for the duration of education in that facility or location. However the Isle of Wight Council will seek to minimise, wherever possible, any changes being made during the course of a pupil or student's education in a particular school or institution. However certain factors, such as financial constraints, relocation or a school or changes in national legislation / guidance may require adjustments to these policies and their application at any time.

4 PROVISION OF EDUCATION TRANSPORT

Education transport is provided jointly in partnership by the Schools & Learning Division and the School Transport Team of the Directorate of the Economy & the Environment.

The Schools & Learning Division will:

- Receive applications from parents for children to receive home-to-education transport.
- Determine the eligibility of children to receive home-to-education transport.
- Notify the School Transport Team of those children who are eligible for free or subsidised transport.

The School Transport Team will:

- Determine the mode of travel for eligible pupils (e.g. bus or taxi), unless the pupil has a statement of Special Educational Needs in which case the mode of transport may be determined by the Statutory Assessment and Review Team.
- Ensure that the transport provided is suitable and accords with school session times.
- Deal with complaints by parents, pupils or schools regarding transport provision.

5 PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS (4-11 year olds)

1. The vast majority of primary school aged pupils attend the nearest primary school to their home address, and places are allocated on this basis, unless parents express a preference for an alternative primary school. If the pupil attends their nearest primary school, the following entitlements will apply for the following age ranges:
 - a) **4 - 7 year olds (school years R, 1 & 2):** If the school is more than 2 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-school transport.
 - b) **7 – 11 year olds (school years 3 – 6):** 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.
2. If parents choose to send their child to an alternative school to that referred to above (1), no entitlement to receive free home-to-education transport will exist – irrespective of the distance of that school from the pupil's home address. The only exception to this will be if one of the circumstances as set out in the remaining paragraphs below applies – or see the FAQ's in appendix 1.
3. If parents are allocated, by the local authority, a place for their child in an alternative school to their preferred school(s) (due to those schools being oversubscribed), the same entitlements to home-to-education transport will exist if the 2 and 3 miles rules as set out in (1)(a) and (1)(b) above apply subject to that alternative school being the nearest school with an available place.

However if parents have indicated second/third preferences which are not their nearest school(s) with an available place, those parental preferences will take priority over the nearest such school and no entitlement to receive free home to education transport will exist. In the circumstances where such an allocation has been made, parents will be given a limited opportunity to apply for their child to be allocated instead to the nearest school with an available place.

4. Furthermore, in the circumstances that a child is entitled to free school meals or their family is in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit, the following entitlement will apply:
 - a) **7 – 11 year olds:** If the pupil attends their nearest qualifying school *, and this school is more than 2 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-school transport.
** Qualifying schools are: community, foundation or voluntary schools; community or foundation special schools; non-maintained special schools; pupil referral units; maintained nursery schools; or academies or trust schools.*
5. If a pupil does not qualify for free transport in the circumstances of (1) and (3) above, but the shortest available walking route to school is considered to be unsafe (in an assessment undertaken by the local authority) then the pupil shall be entitled to receive free home-to-education transport if their home address is more than one mile from the school.

6 SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS (11-16 year olds)

1. All secondary school aged pupils will have a priority (catchment) area secondary school. If the pupil attends that school, the following entitlements will apply for 11-16 year olds (school years 7 to 11):
 - 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.

2. If a pupil is entitled to receive free home-to-education transport in line with the policy above (1) to their priority area school, the following entitlement will also apply:

The pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-education transport to an alternative school (chosen by parental preference) that is also more than 3 miles from their home address, provided that the alternative school is not more than 3 miles from their priority area school

3. If parents choose to send their child to an alternative school where neither (1) above nor (1) & (2) above apply, no entitlement to receive free home-to-education transport will exist – irrespective of the distance of that school from the pupil's home address. The only exception to this will be if one of the circumstances as set out in the remaining paragraphs below applies – or see the FAQ's in Appendix 1.
4. If parents are allocated, by the local authority, a place for their child in an alternative school to that which they indicated as their first preference, (due to that school being oversubscribed), the same entitlements to home-to-education transport will exist if the 3 miles rule as set out in (1) above applies subject to that alternative school being the nearest school with an available place.

However if parents have indicated second/third preferences which are not the nearest school(s) with an available place, those preferences take priority over the nearest such school and no entitlement to receive free home to education transport will exist. In the circumstances where such an allocation has been made, parents will be given a limited opportunity to apply for their child to be allocated instead to the nearest school with an available place.

5. Furthermore, in the circumstances that a child is entitled to free school meals or their family is in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit, the following entitlement will apply:
 - If the pupil attends one of their three nearest qualifying schools *, and this school is more than 2 miles but less than 6 miles ** from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-education transport.

* *Qualifying schools are: community, foundation or voluntary schools; community or foundation special schools; non-maintained special schools; pupil referral units; maintained nursery schools; or academies or trust schools.*

** *The 6 miles maximum rule is applied by calculating the distance along road routes.*

6. Furthermore, in the circumstances that a child is entitled to free school meals or their family is in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit, the following entitlement will apply:
 - a) If the pupil attends the nearest school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief, and this school is more than 2 miles but less than 15 miles from the pupil's home address, the pupil will be entitled to receive free home-to-education transport. This only applies to schools on the Island.

7. If a pupil does not qualify for free transport due to living within three miles of the school (as per the rule above), but the shortest available walking route to school is considered to be unsafe (in an assessment undertaken by the local authority) then the pupil shall be entitled to receive free home-to-education transport. The minimum qualifying distance for a route being unsafe is deemed as 1 mile.

7 POST-16 STUDENTS IN SIXTH FORMS & FURTHER EDUCATION (16-19 year olds)

If an island based student attends full-time post 16 study (16 - 19 year olds) at a school sixth form [school years 12 & 13], the IW College or an Island-based training provider the following entitlements will apply:

1. If 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. This entitlement can be accessed through the purchase of a termly bus pass, for use on allocated bus routes. See FAQs for more details.
2. If the school, institution or provider chosen by the student is located less than three miles from the student's home address, the student will not be entitled to receive subsidised home to education transport subsidised by the Isle of Wight Council. However if they are attending a school sixth form they may be able to purchase a seat on one of the allocated bus routes serving that institution (subject to seat availability).
3. If a post-16 full-time student is a Learner with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, the entitlements set out in (7.1) above shall be available up until the age of 24.
4. If a post-16 full-time student is allocated, by the Local Authority in the student's statement, a place at a maintained special school *, then the same entitlements to home to education transport will exist if the two and three mile rules as set out in (7.1.1) and (7.1.2) shall apply, except that the termly bus pass will be made available at no cost.
** This school is St George's School.*
5. Furthermore if a post-16 student with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities has been in receipt of particular home to education transport arrangements due to their statement 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.
6. If a student is from a family on a low income, financial support to assist with the purchase of a termly bus pass may be available from the Post 16 Bursary Fund. Any enquiries / requests for such assistance should be made to the appropriate school sixth form, the IW Council or training provider. See FAQs for more details.
7. 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 Education Participation Team Centre or to a post 16 provider. Travel tokens are available through the Council's Education Participation Team Centre in Newport Town Centre, who can be contacted by phone on 01983 823490.
8. If a full-time student at an Island-based post-16 provider is required, for the purposes of their education / training, to travel beyond the location of their institution / provider, travel tokens can be made available. These allow for travel between secondary schools, the IW College and training providers. Secondary schools, the IW College and

St George's Special School have been provided with minibuses to assist with transport arrangements between establishments.

8 CHILDREN (4 – 16) WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES

1. All pupils with special educational needs and disabilities will have access to, as a minimum, the entitlements as set out in sections (5) and (6) of this document, and the same rules of access and entitlement to free transport shall apply irrespective of whether pupils attend a mainstream or a special school. This includes the provision of free travel for the duration of any time spent at a special unit, if the two and three mile rules apply to those locations.
2. If a pupil does not qualify for free transport in the circumstances of (5.1), (5.3), (6.1) and (6.4) further above, but is unable to walk to their school (or unit) due to their special educational needs / disabilities, then the pupil shall be entitled to receive free home to education transport subject to confirmation being received from a consultant or the child is in receipt of a higher level of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) which indicates that they have restricted mobility.
3. If the parents of a statemented child are allocated, by the Local Authority in the child's statement, a place for their child at a mainstream school with a special unit *, then the same entitlements to home to education transport will exist if the two and three mile rules as set out in (5.1) and (6.1) shall apply, in relation to that school.
** These schools are: Greenmount Primary School, Broadlea Primary School, Carisbrooke College and Sandown Bay Academy.*
4. If the parents of a statemented child are allocated, by the Local Authority in the child's statement, a place at a maintained special school *, then the same entitlements to home to education transport will exist if the two and three mile rules as set out in (5.1) and (6.1) shall apply, in relation to that school. If a statemented child does not qualify for free transport due to living within two or three miles of the special school, they may still be entitled to free transport if their statement requires it to be provided.
** These schools are: Medina House School and St George's School.*
5. If the parents of a statemented child are allocated, by the Local Authority in the child's statement, a place at an independent or non-maintained special school, then the same entitlements to home to education transport will exist if the two and three mile rules as set out in (5.1), (5.4), (6.1), (6.5) (10.1) and (10.2) shall apply, in relation to that school.
6. If the parents of a statemented or non-statemented child choose to send their child to an alternative independent or non-maintained school that is not named in the child's statement, no entitlement to receive free home to education transport will exist – irrespective of the distance of that school from the pupil's home address.
7. If a pupil is, at some point during the academic year, in receipt of respite care at an alternative location, they will not receive free transport unless it can be provided at no additional cost within existing transport arrangements.
8. When free transport is provided for statemented pupils by the Local Authority, there is a requirement that routes should be safe, non-stressful, and least restrictive. In exceptional cases transport tailored to the needs of the individual statemented child may be arranged. Parents, schools and Special Educational Need and Disability officers are consulted as to the nature of the child's needs and any such special travel arrangements as may be required.

9. Transitional Arrangements

A number of the policies set out in this document represent a change from those policies which were in place over previous years. In bringing forward this new home to education transport policy, the Local Authority has sought to generally apply an approach that would see the arrangements for existing pupils continue for the duration of their education at a particular institution – except in circumstances where the pupil's personal circumstances have changed, therefore negating the previous arrangements. This section sets out those transitional arrangements for existing pupils where a number of policies have changed.

1. If a pupil is attending a voluntary aided primary school or is currently travelling from a home address within the parish of Rookley area to Chillerton and Rookley Primary School and
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entered that school prior to September 2012; and
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prior to September 2012 was in receipt of free home to education transport, then they shall be entitled to continue to receive this free transport until their education at this school comes to an end, subject to their home address continuing to be within the parish of Rookley area. Any entitlements under section 5 will be unaffected by the phasing out of these particular arrangements.

2. If a pupil is attending a community, voluntary aided, trust or academy secondary school and
–
Entered that school prior to September 2012; and
–
Prior to September 2012 was in receipt of free home to education transport, then they shall be entitled to continue receiving this free transport until the end of Year 11 (aged 16), subject to their home address continuing to be more than three miles from the school. Any entitlements under section 6 will be unaffected by the phasing out of these particular arrangements. The exception to this is the provision of free transport for those attending Cowes Enterprise College who live within the three miles distance and previously received transport from the floating bridge to the school.

10 Exceptional Circumstances

There are particular occasions when the Local Authority will provide free transport for a limited period of time due to a change in circumstances other than those covered in section 8 above.

1. For those families who may experience homelessness free transport will be provided for a maximum period of six months for the children of families who have been relocated to a different area but have registered a request with the Housing Department to return to their previous area when permanent accommodation becomes available. A letter of confirmation from the Housing Association will be required. This provision will also apply to families housed in the Women's Refuge. Free transport will take the form of a bus pass or the cost equivalent of a bus pass. Where a parent elects to receive the cost equivalent, only one sum shall be provided irrespective of the number of children who are being transported. No other form of transport will be provided.
2. For children in the care of the Local Authority free transport (limited to a bus pass only) will be provided to children who move family placement, but wish to remain at their original school, and also to those children who would not normally qualify within the existing transport policy. All children must still live more than two miles from their primary school and more than three miles from their secondary school to qualify for this provision

Appendix 1 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Administrative and operational arrangements:

How can I apply for free transport?

All requests for free transport (4-16 year olds) should be made using the Isle of Wight Council's application form for free transport which can be obtained from either the child's current school, or from the Admissions and Transport Team, County Hall, Newport, (Telephone 823455) or online at www.iwight.com. Completed forms should be returned via the child's current school or direct to the School Admissions and Transport Section at County Hall.

All requests for subsidised post-16 transport (the termly bus pass) should be made using the Isle of Wight Council's application form for post-16 transport, which can be obtained from the student's institution or provider, from the Admissions and Transport Team, County Hall, Newport, (telephone number 823455), or online at www.iwight.com. Completed forms should be returned via the student's institution or provider or direct to the Admissions and Transport team at County Hall. Applications can be made from August onwards. Those students who pay a termly contribution are reminded each term that another payment is due.

In the case of the IW College, they are able to collect the contribution and issue termly bus passes on behalf of the local authority. Once the students know which establishment they are going to post-16, they should contact the provider to discuss their transport needs.

When will the free transport become available?

Free transport (4-16 year olds) will not be arranged until the request is authorised by the Admissions and Transport Team. A valid ticket will be sent by the School Transport Team to the child's school within 7 days of authorisation.

Pupils who have been notified that they are entitled to free transport can board the school bus on the first day of term, providing they are in school uniform. Bus passes will be issued by the school during the day so that they can be used on the return journey and on all subsequent journeys.

Subsidised post-16 transport (the termly bus pass) should, wherever possible, be purchased in advance of the term starting. Once the bus pass has been issued, students can use them with immediate effect to travel one journey in each direction, term time only, to and from the institution or provider they attend on a daily basis.

Travel tokens that are issued to students in advance of their travel can be used at any time of the day, including weekends.

How much does the subsidised post-16 transport cost?

The cost of a termly bus pass is set a few months in advance of each academic year, as part of the Isle of Wight Council's setting of all fees and charges. The rate will be agreed and published no later than May in advance of the academic year starting in September.

Could my request for free or subsidised travel be refused?

Yes - if you do not meet the criteria as set out in this policy document.

If your request for free travel (4-16 year olds) is refused you will be told the reason(s) for our decision. However, if you disagree with this you will be able to appeal against our decision.

The grounds upon which you can appeal are:

- parent or child medical needs
- exceptional family hardship
- other exceptional circumstances

The Notice of Appeal against a Free Transport Decision Form and a confidential Financial Questionnaire together with guidance on how to appeal can be obtained by contacting the Admissions and Transport team at County Hall, Newport. Your case will then be heard by a panel of elected Members.

If you believe that your request for free or subsidised transport has been refused based on an incorrect assessment of your circumstances, you are entitled to challenge such a decision and should supply all relevant information when submitting such a claim. Your claim should be submitted to the Admissions and Transport team at County Hall, Newport.

If your request for subsidised post-16 transport (the termly bus pass) is refused, it is probably because you do not meet the criteria set out in this document. Please see further below in these FAQ's for alternative support which you may be able to make use of.

Does the entitlement to free or subsidised transport end when I reach a certain age?

The entitlements set out in this document will carry on until the end of the academic year during which a pupil or student reaches a certain age:

- Entitlements for 4-7 year olds will continue to the end of the academic year in which they reach 7 years old (Year 2)
- Entitlements for 7-11 year olds will continue to the end of the academic year during which they reach 11 years old (Year 6)
- Entitlements for 11-16 year olds will continue until the end of the academic year in which they reach 16 years old (Year 11)
- Entitlements for 11-19 year olds will continue to the end of the academic year in which they reach 19 years old.
- Entitlements for young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities will continue to the end of the academic year during which they reach 24 years old.

Furthermore, if a student has started a course before their 19th birthday, they will be eligible to apply for support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund through their school, institution, or training provider.

My child is joining a school mid-way through an academic year or not during the entrance year (Year R or Year 7). Do we have the same entitlements to free transport and how do we apply out of the regular application period?

Pupils joining a school, during an academic year have the same entitlements as those children who join the school at the normal transfer point. Parents will be informed of their entitlement when they are offered a place at a school, and will have the same right to appeal if they are refused a free bus pass.

How do I know what my nearest or priority (catchment) area school is?

Pupils transferring from primary to secondary school are notified of their nearest or priority area school when transfer packs are sent out (in the September before they are due to transfer). In all other cases, parents should contact the Admissions and Transport Team at County Hall.

Details of the location of primary schools and the secondary priority areas can be found in the "Educating your Child" booklets which can also be found online at www.iwight.com/admissions.

Some schools do not have priority areas e.g. the Chale area is an "Option Zone" for Brighstone CE and Niton primary schools. This means that parents living in Chale can choose either of these two schools as their preferred school and transport will be provided to either school, subject to the home address being more than two miles from the chosen school.

No priority (catchment) areas exist in relation to post-16 provision. The three mile rule for entitlement to subsidised transport applies equally for all Island-based institutions and providers.

How is the distance from my home address to the school, institution or provider calculated?

When distances are calculated from a pupil's home address to school, the measure of the shortest available walking route from the centre of the home address to the centre of the

school building is used to ascertain whether the pupil lives more than the minimum number of miles to be entitled to free transport provision. This is calculated using the Local Authority's Geographical Information System which draws on Ordnance Survey, Isle of Wight Rights of Way, National Land and Property Gazetteer data, using Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association Guidelines.

Whilst the minimum distances of two or three miles are calculated using the above method, the particular rules relating to less than three, 6 and 15 miles (as set out in 6.2, 6.5, and 6.6 (a)) are applied by calculating the distance along road routes. This is from the centre point of both home and school buildings.

My local high school has been closed and a new secondary school has re-opened on the same site. Does the entitlement I was awarded when I entered the high school still apply in terms of my attendance at the successor secondary school?

Yes. The entitlements have transferred and continue under the new school arrangements, until the age of 16. Beyond this age the post-16 subsidised entitlements will apply.

I consider that the route from my home address to the school is unsafe to walk. What can I do?

If you consider that the route from your home address to the school is unsafe, you should contact the School Admissions and Transport team who will arrange for a risk assessment to be carried out by the Road Safety Officer. If it is considered to be an unsafe route, free transport will be provided as set out in 5.5. and 6.7. This consideration does not apply for Post-16 students.

How does the local authority determine whether parents are receiving the maximum Working Tax Credit?

When a customer is first awarded tax credits, or following a change in their household circumstances, HM Revenue and Customs issue a 'tax credits award notice' detailing the breakdown and amount of the award. Part two of the award notice gives details of "How we work out your tax credits" including details of the full WTC elements. This is the maximum amount a customer can receive in WTC in any year. It then lists "any deduction due to your income" and shows the net amount payable. It is therefore apparent from the award notice whether a person is receiving maximum WTC or a reduced sum due to income.

I understand that the statutory age for education is due to increase from 16 to 17 year olds from September 2013. Does this mean that the free transport arrangements for pupils aged 4 to 16 years will be extended upwards?

The government has yet to clarify what the statutory transport arrangements will or may be put in place alongside this change in the statutory age for education. Until such time our policy for free transport will apply to 4 to 16 year olds, and the post-16 subsidised arrangements will continue for 16-19 year olds.

Travel arrangements

Where will the free transport be provided from?

In the circumstances that an entitlement to free transport provision (4-16 year olds) exists, this will be provided from the nearest designated public bus stop or other agreed locations when a primary pupils home address is in a rural location some distance from the nearest bus stop. Parents are responsible for getting their children to the bus stop at the beginning of each school day and also for their return home from the bus stop at the end of the school day. Transport will be timed to coincide with the start and finish times of the school, institution or provider, as far as is reasonably possible.

IN the circumstances that entitlement to subsidised post-16 transport provision (the termly bus pass) exists, this will also be provided from the nearest public bus stop. Students are responsible for getting themselves to the bus stop, in time for a scheduled service which gets them to their institution or provider at the required time.

What happens if my child needs to attend pre or after school activities? Can they use their bus pass on an earlier or later scheduled bus service?

Pupils can use their bus passes on network buses in order to attend pre-school activities provided they can produce evidence that they are attending such an activity. Bus passes can be used on network buses up to 6 p.m. by pupils attending after school activities.

How long will a school bus journey take for 4-16 year olds?

The length of all school bus journeys will be kept to a minimum, but due to the rural nature of the Isle of Wight and the number of bus stops which may need to be called at it may not always be possible to keep journey times to under the maximum suggested by the Department for Education. The same applies to post-16 subsidised provision.

My child is not entitled to free transport, but there appear to be spaces on the buses taking pupils in the same direction. Can my child occupy one of these spare seats?

Sometimes arrangements can be made for a child who is not entitled to free school transport, or subsidised transport post 16, to occupy a spare seat on a Wight bus or contract vehicle. This is on the understanding that the concession will be withdrawn should:

- the seat be required for a child entitled to transport: OR
- the existing school transport arrangements are altered.

There will be a charge for spare seats. Applications for concessionary seats are made to the Council's School Transport Team, Enterprise House, St Cross Business Park, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 2WB. Tel. 823780.

Where a concessionary seat is provided for a child to a school on transport serving other schools, the Authority will not accept responsibility for their safe supervision from the time the child has left the vehicle to their arrival at the home school. Similarly, the Authority accepts no responsibility for the return journey when the child is not travelling on the school bus.

Do pupils from different schools, institutions or providers travel on the same buses?

Pupils from different schools generally travel on separate buses. However, in order to minimise the number of buses used the Council will seek to combine transport for pupils to more than one school where it is considered efficient and practical to do so, particularly where schools are located in close proximity to one another. However, primary (4-11) and secondary (11-16) pupils will continue to travel on separate buses, but the latter may be combined with post-16 students where they attend the same secondary school.

Will my child travel to school on a dedicated school bus, or will they travelling alongside members of the public on regular routes?

The majority of pupils will travel on a bus which is part of the Council's School Transport contract and will therefore be closed to members of the public. In a few instances, pupils will be required to travel on a public bus service due to the location of their home address, although this will not apply to the primary school age range (4-11). When primary aged pupils are required to travel on public services, then arrangements will be made to enable the parent/carer to travel with them.

I am concerned about my primary school aged child travelling unaccompanied. Will these pupils be supervised on the bus?

The Council provides funding to school to enable them to provide adult escorts for pupils under the age of 8 years who travel to school by bus. This role is usually carried out by a member of school staff who will be known to the children.

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

Yes, with the following provisions:

- All buses are fitted with seat belts
- Baby seats are provided when required
- All buses have at least one escort on board
- All drivers and escorts have enhanced CRB disclosures
- The same 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
- All buses have radio/cassettes to help ensure a pleasant journey for all passengers

Behaviour**What happens when pupils misbehave on school transport?**

The Authority has a procedure for dealing with children who misbehave on school transport. The procedure is at Appendix 3. This should be read in conjunction with the Authority's booklet "School Transport Code of Good Practice", which is available on the School Transport webpage. If the term ticket held by a pupil is in any way discretionary, e.g. post-16, denominational school, East Cowes to Cowes College, 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.

What happens if my child is excluded from school?

If a pupil is permanently excluded from a school and an alternative placement is arranged by the Commissioner for SEN and Alternative Provision, transport will be provided to the alternative school if that school is beyond the relevant walking distance.

Alternative arrangements**My preferred school is full and I do not wish my child to go to the place offered at the nearest alternative school. Am I still entitled to free transport if I choose to send them to another school?**

No. Refusing a place offered at the nearest alternative school means that parents will be responsible for arrangements and costs to and from the school they prefer their child to go to.

My child is not entitled to free transport to their priority area secondary school, because we live within 3 miles of it. Am I entitled to free transport if I choose to send them to an alternative school which is more than 3 miles away?

No. Free transport to an alternative secondary school will only be provided in line with the policies set out in section 6 of this policy, such as when a pupil is entitled to free transport to their priority area secondary school and an alternative school is not more than 3 miles from this.

What happens if a pupil or student does not qualify for either free or subsidised transport arrangements? Are there other discounts available or travel?

Southern Vectis offer concessionary bus fares for young people under the age of 19, including half price single, Rover and Freedom tickets (tickets for one, two, seven, 30 or 90 days duration). For further information please see the Southern Vectis website: <http://islandbuses.info/tickets02.shtml>

We live in East Cowes. Is Cowes Enterprise College our priority area school and does the floating bridge count as part of the walking route?

Some areas of East Cowes lie within the priority area for Cowes Enterprise College and where this is the case, the floating bridge is included in the measurement of the walking route. Pupils and students will be required to walk from the floating bridge to the college. A risk assessment has been carried out on this route by the Council's Road Safety officer and the route is deemed to be safe for pupils to walk along.

I wish my child to attend a school on the mainland. Are there any entitlements to free transport?

No, unless your child is supported by a statement of Special Educational Needs that requires the provision of particular transport arrangements to that school.

I wish my child to attend an independent school. Are there any entitlements to free transport?

No, unless your child is supported by a statement of Special Educational Needs that requires the provision of particular transport arrangements to that school.

My child is undertaking work experience in another part of the Island. Are there any entitlements to free transport for 4-16 year olds?

Pupils are advised to seek advice from their school. Schools will often make transport arrangements themselves.

Are there any circumstances in which we may be able to receive free transport (4-16 year olds) which we would otherwise not be entitled to?

The Council may, at its discretion, provide transport for pupils otherwise ineligible for free transport, who are temporarily unwell and unable to access their school normally. Transport requests by parents must be supported by a doctor's certificate and by the Education Welfare Service and will not be approved unless parents can show that they are unable to make their own arrangements.

I am disabled and therefore unable to support my child in accessing home to education transport arrangements. Can these circumstances be taken into account?

The Equality Act 2010 (previously the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 legislation) places a duty of care on the public sector to promote equality and to ensure that disabled people are not discriminated against. They must ensure that all services are planned with their needs fully considered in advance. The Council will be happy to consider any requests for additional support in such circumstances.

We are moving house and our new address will be beyond the relevant walking distance from the priority area school which applied to our old address. Are there any entitlements to free transport?

If a pupil attending the priority area secondary school subsequently move house to the priority area of a different secondary school, the Council will provide free transport to the original school, where this is requested by parents, provided that the pupil has attended for one academic term and that the move takes place while the pupil is in years 10 and 11 (GCSE) only. In all cases free transport will only apply where the new address is beyond the relevant walking distance from the original school.

In any other circumstances (such as primary age range and years 7, 8 and 9 in secondary schools) free transport will not apply, other than where the pupil transfers to a new priority area school relating to their new address and that is beyond the relevant walking distance.

My child is having a temporary change of address. Are there any entitlements to free transport?

No. Where pupils who are entitled to free transport have a temporary change of address, e.g. staying with friends or relatives while parents are on holiday or in hospital, transport arrangements and all costs must be met by parents.

We have been made homeless. Are there any entitlements to free transport (for 4-16 year olds)?

Free transport will be provided for a maximum period of six months for the children of homeless families who have been re-located to a different area but have registered a request with the housing department to return to their previous area when permanent accommodation becomes available. A letter of confirmation from the Housing Association will be required. This provision will also apply to families housed in the Women's Refuge. Free transport will take the form of a bus pass or the cost equivalent of a bus pass. Where a parent elects to receive the cost equivalent, only one sum shall be provided irrespective of the number of children who are being transported. No other form of transport will be provided.

Are there special arrangements for children (4-16 year olds) who are within the care of the local authority?

Free transport (limited to a bus pass only) will be provided to looked after children who move family placement, but wish to remain at their original school, and also to those children who would not normally qualify within the existing transport policy. All children must live more than two miles from their primary school and more than three miles from their secondary school to qualify for this provision.

Post 16 travel arrangements

What times during the day can I use my bus pass or travel tokens?

If you have paid the contribution and are issued with a bus pass you can travel one journey in each direction, term time only, to and from the educational establishment you attend on a daily basis.

Travel tokens that are issued to students in advance of their travel can be used at any time of the day, including weekends.

If I am 19 during my course can I continue to receive subsidised transport?

If you are eligible for the subsidised bus pass you can continue to use it during that academic year. Providing you have started a course before your 19th birthday, you will be eligible to apply for the post 16 bursary through your school, Isle of Wight College or training provider.

Support is also available for learners aged 19-24 on the 31st August in the funding year 2012/2013 who have a Learning Difficulty/Disability Assessment and have Additional Learning Support (ALS) needs over £5,500 in the year.

How will I be assessed to see if I am eligible for support?

The subsidised bus pass that students can apply for (a contribution is required per term) is not means-tested. The only criterion is that the student must live more than three miles from the educational establishment they attend.

Schools, colleges and training providers will have a policy showing what criteria they are using to establish eligibility for access to their Post 16 Bursary Fund. Students need to contact the establishment that they are attending.

What help will I receive if I have a learning difficulty and/or disability, or if I am facing other difficulties in following my course?

Students who attend St George's Special School are not expected to pay the current fee as per the home to education transport policy contribution for the termly bus pass.

Any special transport arrangements i.e. taxi transport that is in place for the student in Year 11 will continue Post 16.

Support is also available for learners aged 19-24 on the 31st August in the funding year 2012/2013 who have a Learning Difficulty/Disability Assessment and have Additional Learning Support (ALS) needs over £5,500 in the year.

In drawing up the Moving On Plan assessment (S139a) for young people between the ages of 16 and 24, the LA Education Participation Team Adviser will describe the travel needs of the young person.

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

The Local Authority (LA) encourages local education training providers to support independent travel training for young people aged 16 – 19 as part of the curriculum. St George's Special School and the IW College have trained staff that can offer this service to their students. For students aged 16-24 who are attending the IW College the Moving On Plan assessment (S139a) written by the LA Education Participation team advisers (Connexions) describes the travel needs of the young person

When and how do I apply for transport support

Applications can be made from August onwards by applying to School Admissions and Transport Team at County Hall. Applications are sent from the LA direct to the applicant. Schools also have a supply of application forms so that students who do not apply on time can apply once the term has commenced. Applicants who pay a contribution termly are reminded each term that another payment is due.

The Isle of Wight College collect the contribution and issue tickets on behalf of the LA.

Once the students know which establishment they are going to post-16, they should contact the provider to discuss their transport needs.

Information on concessionary fares is available in all secondary schools, Isle of Wight College and training providers.

What help can I apply for if I choose to travel to a 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 and in full time education at a mainland college to travel for half the normal adult price. Students can apply for an application in writing to Wightlink Ltd, Gunwharf Road, Portsmouth, PO1 2LA.

For further information please see the Wightlink website as detailed below:

<http://www.wightlink.co.uk/fares-tickets/fares/season-tickets.aspx>

Red Funnel Student Saver tickets allow students who are 16 to 18 and in full time

education at a mainland college to travel on a reduced ticket rate. Students can apply in writing to Red Funnel, 12 Bugle Street, Southampton, SO14 2JY or on line at <http://www2.redfunnel.co.uk/ferry-travel/frequent-travellers/hi-speed-saver-tickets> For further information please see the Red Funnel website at the above address.

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 apply for an application form from Hovertravel ticket offices.

For further information please see 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](#).

What support is available for me if I am applying to attend Further Education, Higher Education on the mainland?

Support may be available through the Post 16 Bursary [Fund](#) to support students to attend interviews and open days on the mainland. Contact your establishment for further details

Home to Education Transport

The table below summarises the statutory duties and discretionary arrangements in respect of Home to Education Transport:

Statutory Transport

These are the elements which the Isle of Wight Council has a legal duty to provide.

Primary aged pupils – The regulations regarding free transport are:			
Age of pupil	School attended	Distance between home & school	Means-tested
Up to and including 7 years (children must be of compulsory school age or in a reception class)	Designated as serving the area in which they live or the nearest qualifying school*	More than 2 miles	No
8 Years and over	Designated as serving the area in which they live or the nearest qualifying school*	More than 3 miles	No
8 Years and under 11	Nearest qualifying school*	More than 2 miles	Child is entitled to free school meals or family in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit
Secondary pupils – The regulations regarding free transport are:			
Age of pupil	School attended	Distance between home & school	Means-tested
11 – 16 years (secondary)	Designated as serving the area in which they live or the nearest qualifying school*	More than 3 miles	No
11 – 16 years	One of the three nearest qualifying schools*	More than 2 miles but less than 6 miles (within the Local Authority)	Child is entitled to free school meals or family in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit
Schools attended on the Grounds of Religion or Belief – The regulations regarding free transport are:			
Age of pupil	School attended	Distance between home & school	Means-tested
11 – 16 years (secondary)	The nearest school preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief.	More than 2 miles but less than 15 miles (within the Local Authority)	Child is entitled to free school meals or family in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit
Up to 10 years (primary)	The Council is not required to provide transport support for primary aged children attending schools preferred by reason of a parent's religion or belief.		

Discretionary Transport

These are the elements which the Isle of Wight Council determines locally to provide, over and above the statutory minimum.

Secondary pupils – The arrangements regarding discretionary free transport are:

Age of pupil	School attended	Distance between home & school	Means-tested
11 – 16 years (secondary)	An alternative school chosen by parental preference	Not more than 3 miles from the priority area school but more than 3 miles from the home address The priority area school must also be more than 3 miles from the home address	No

Appendix 3: PROTOCOL IN RESPECT OF MISBEHAVIOUR ON SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Stage 1: If misbehaviour is reported either by the school or the operator

The Public Transport Section will write a warning letter to the parent, copied to the School and Children's Services.

NB: In the case of serious misbehaviour which, in the view of the Public Transport Section, the School, and Children's Services, warrants immediate exclusion from usual travel arrangements, a letter confirming this action will be sent to the parent by the Public Transport Section, which will both confirm the action taken and state the duration of the exclusion. In such cases Stage 1 will not apply and reference will be made to the relevant sections of Stage 2.

Stage 2: A first serious instance of misbehaviour or if misbehaviour occurs again

The Public Transport Section will contact the School and together they will decide whether an exclusion from usual transport is appropriate and for how long this will last. Before informing the parents of the decision, the Public Transport Section will check with the Schools and Learning Division to ensure it is content that the punishment is appropriate. (This is only a safeguard so the Department can be confident that it can support the action taken if it is challenged later). The letter to the parents from the Public Transport Section will be copied to both the School and the Admissions and Transport team.

If the term ticket held by a pupil is in any way discretionary, e.g. post-16, denominational school, East Cowes to Cowes High, 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.

Where issue of a term ticket has no discretionary element in its award then the following could ensue:

- a. Southern Vectis term ticket holders: With the agreement of the Council and the school, travel on usual bus service will be withdrawn. Travel on an alternative service and possibly at timings earlier in the morning and later after school will be required during the ban.

Appendix 4 – Useful addresses

Useful addresses

For more information please contact Directgov on:

Website: www.direct.gov.uk

Student Services

Isle of Wight College

Medina Way

Newport

Isle of Wight

PO30 5TA

Tel: 01983 526631 Fax: 01983 521707

Website: www.iwcollege.ac.uk

Southern Vectis

Nelson Road

Newport

Isle of Wight

PO30 1RD

Tel: 01983 827000

Website: www.islandbuses.info

Education Participation Team

29 High Street

Newport

Isle of Wight

PO30 1SS

Tel: 01983 823490 Fax: 01983 530723

Website: www.iwight.com/connexions

Carisbrooke College

Tel: 01983 524651

Website: www.carisbrookehighschool.co.uk

Cowes Enterprise College

Tel: 01983 203103

Website: www.coweshigh.org.uk

Christ the King College

Tel: 01983 537070

Website: www.christ-the-king.iow.sch.uk

Medina College

Tel: 01983 526523

Website: www.medina.iow.sch.uk

Ryde Academy

Tel: 01983 567331

Website: www.rydehigh.iow.sch.uk

Sandown Bay Academy
Tel: 01983 402142
Website: www.sandownhighschool.com

St George's School
Tel: 01983 524634
Email: office@stgeorges.iow.sch.uk

FNTC Training & Consultancy Ltd
Tel: 01983 559322
Website: www.fntctraining.co.uk

Haddon Training Ltd
Tel: 01672 519977
Website: www.haddontraining.co.uk

HTP
Tel: 01983 533926
Website: www.htp.uk.com

Island Training
Tel: 01983 550609
Website: www.islandtraining.org

Platform One
Tel: 01983 537550
Website: www.platformone.org

Smart Training & Recruitment
Tel: 01983 530440
Website: www.smarttar.co.uk

The Care Learning Centre
Tel: 01983 533993
Website: www.carelearningcentre.co.uk

UKSA
Tel: 01983 294941
Website: www.uksa.org

Appendix 5 – Complaints procedure

What is the process if I need to complain?

If you wish to make a complaint it should be sent in writing in the first instance to the school, Isle of Wight College or training provider.

If you feel that the outcome of your complaint is unsatisfactory, you should write to:

Chief Executive
Isle of Wight Council
County Hall
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1UD

If you still feel that your complaint has not had a satisfactory outcome, then you may wish to take this up with the Secretary of State, Department for Education, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ

Website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/>