

TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT FOR LEARNERS AGED 16 - 19

2008 - 2009



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TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT FOR LEARNERS AGED 16-19
2008 / 2009 ACADEMIC YEAR

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This statement relates to the transport arrangements for learners aged 16 -19 for the 2008/9 academic year and although correct at time of publication , Torfaen County Borough Council reserves the right to make any changes as necessary to enable it to comply with any changes in policy and or legislation .

The statement will also need to take account of any initiatives particularly the 14 – 19 Pathways agenda (see introduction).

1. **INTRODUCTION**

As required under Section 509 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education Act 2002), this statement provides information on the transport support and services available for young people aged 16 – 19 who reside within the County Borough of Torfaen.

The statement may however be subject to change particularly in relation to the 14 – 19 Learning Pathways agenda.

The development of partnership approach to transport is seen as critical to improving the retention of young people in Education and Training. The Welsh Assembly Government therefore requires partnerships to take account of the need to provide learners with reasonable opportunities for choice between educational establishments and there has been a significant increase in collaboration between establishments to deliver courses for the 14 – 16 pupil cohort. The development of 14 – 16 Learning Pathways may therefore require more complex and varied transport arrangements and may have an impact on the Authority's current transport policy.

Torfaen will therefore have to review its current transport policy in light of the Learning Pathways agenda and this statement may therefore be subject to change.

When producing this statement Local Authority's are required to consult with other transport 'partners' etc , full details of which are contained Appendix 1

TORFAEN'S GENERAL TRANSPORT POLICY

- a) Torfaen's **General Transport Policy** is to provide travel assistance to Learners aged 16-18 on 1 September 2008. Learners aged 19 or over on this date are not eligible for travel assistance from the Authority even if their course of study commenced before this date. In these circumstances Learners who attend a Further Education College are advised to contact their respective college for details of available transport provision. In addition to the above age criteria Learners must also meet the following criteria:

- they reside within the County Borough of Torfaen;
- they reside at least 2 miles from the school or college to be attended and either attend their catchment area school or the nearest suitable educational establishment.

This would also apply in those circumstances where a student has to attend an educational establishment outside of the County Borough area of Torfaen.

- they attend a full time course which requires attendance of 16 or more hours per week.

By implication therefore:

- Transport assistance will not be provided for Learners who choose to follow a course in a school or college other than the catchment area school if a similar qualification is available in the catchment school.
- If the catchment area school does not provide the course the Learner wishes to follow, the Authority will provide assistance to an alternative school or college subject to the above criteria.

Where a course of study is not available locally or within travelling distance and a Learner needs to stay away from home, no assistance is provided.

- b) To confirm **Distance Eligibility** the Authority uses a Digital Information Mapping System to measure the safest and shortest available walking route between a Learners home and the educational establishment to be attended.
- c) Free transport may also be provided on **Safety Grounds** where the Authority is satisfied that the route between home and school/college is sufficiently dangerous to warrant such provision.
- d) Learners may also be provided with **Concessionary Transport** where they would be allowed to occupy spare seats on Contracted buses as a temporary concession even though they do not satisfy the criteria

referred to above. No charges are currently imposed by the Authority for providing transport in such cases although concessions may have to be withdrawn at short notice.

- e) Pupil / students whose **behaviour** during the journey to and from school is not of an acceptable standard may have any agreed travelling arrangements withdrawn.

2. HOW TO APPLY FOR TRANSPORT

Learners can submit an application for transport assistance at any time. Both Torfaen and Coleg Gwent publish information towards the end of the spring term on entitlement and on the procedures to follow when applying for assistance

4. ASSESSMENT

Learners will be assessed for entitlement to transport assistance on the basis of the criteria set out in (1) above.

Learners with Additional Needs may be provided with free transport even though they do not meet the distance criteria where the LEA is of the opinion that such provision is justified. Mature Learners who also have Additional Needs may be allowed to occupy spare seats as a temporary concession even though they do not satisfy the age criteria referred to earlier. No charges are imposed by the LEA for providing transport in such cases but such provision may have to be withdrawn at short notice.

5. TRANSPORT PROVISION

If a Learner meets the eligibility criteria as mentioned in 1 above travel assistance will be provided as follows:

5.1 Travel Grant

Learners can receive an annual travel grant of £143.00 (subject to review) paid in 3 termly instalments.

5.2 Season Tickets

Learners can receive a season ticket to use on the public service network if they or their parents/carers are in receipt of the following benefits:

- Income Support or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance;
- Child Tax Credit (but do not receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual taxable income of less than £15,575.00) ;
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit ;
- Receive support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

5.3 ' Contracted ' Transport

Contracted transport may be provided where no public service transport is available and or where a Learner has Additional Needs which means they are unable to access public service provision (see section 6 Additional Needs).

Where Contracted transport is provided it may not always be possible to arrange the routes of vehicles to pass close to the homes of all Learners. It may therefore be necessary for Learners to make their own arrangements to get to the nearest 'pick up' point of the vehicle. Every effort is made however to keep this distance as short as possible and it would not normally be expected to exceed 1 mile.

5.4 'Special' Schemes

Where Learners are entitled to receive a travel grant (currently £143.00 - subject to review) and attend either Coleg Gwent or St. Albans RC High School they can apply to receive a free season ticket via schemes agreed between these establishments and local transport operators.

In these circumstances Torfaen pays a Learners Travel grant direct to either Coleg Gwent or to the bus company used by St.Albans with any additional costs being met by these establishments through the schemes agreed with local transport operators.

5.5 Non LEA Provision

Coleg Gwent will consider requests for financial assistance towards the cost of transport for learners aged 16-18 on the 1 September 2008 who have been refused support by their Local Authority because they live under 2 miles and/or the course they wish to study is available at their local school

Coleg Gwent will also consider requests for financial assistance towards the cost of transport for those learners who are aged 19 and over on the 1 September 2008.

Also see Section 8 Additional Support

6. STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Students have special (*additional*) educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special (*additional*) educational provision to be made for them .

Students have a learning difficulty if they :

- (a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of Children (*students*) of the same age ; or
- (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children (*students*) of the same age in schools (*colleges*) within the area of the Local Education Authority;

Special Educational provision means :

- (a) for children of two or over , educational provision which is additional to , or otherwise different from the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LEA other than special schools in the area

(source document Special needs Code of Practice)

The Authority encourages all learners aged 16-18 to use the public service network via the issue of a season ticket or travel grant referred to earlier and many Learners with Additional Needs are given mobility or independence training as part of their course content.

However, specialised transport may be provided for Learners with Additional Needs and the authority currently has a number of such contracts, details as follows:

Blaenafon, Pontypool and Cwmbran to Crosskeys College

Cwmbran to Newport College

Cwmbran to Pontypool College

These contracts do however vary from year to year depending on demand. All enquiries on such provision should be addressed to the Education Department (see section 10 below for details).

Requests for specialised transport are considered on receipt of supporting documentation from the Educational establishment to be attended , outside agencies and from officers from the Authority's Inclusion Service.

Learners and their needs are often well known to the Local Authority as they have often been transported to and from school for many years. However, where necessary risk assessments are carried out and recommendations implemented as necessary e.g. provision of tail lift vehicle and or special harnesses. The transport is also monitored by the Authority's contract monitoring officer on a regular basis.

Following a Risk Assessment and where identified , the authority would also provide escorts on 'contracted' vehicles. Escorts (and drivers) are provided with appropriate training which includes manual handling, child protection, challenging behaviour and vehicle evacuation.

For students aged 19 or over see Section 7 (post 19 provision) and Section 8 (Additional Support).

7. POST 19 PROVISION

Travel assistance is provided to Learners aged 16-18 on the 1 September 2008. Learners aged 19 or over on this date are not eligible for travel assistance from the Authority even if their course of study commenced before this date and in these circumstances, Learners attending a Further Education College are advised to contact their respective college for details of available transport provision. However, for Learners reaching their 19th birthday during an academic year support will be maintained until the end of that year.

In addition Coleg Gwent will consider requests to provide financial assistance for Learners aged 19 and over on the 1 September 2008.

Mature Learners who also have Additional Needs may be allowed to occupy spare seats as a temporary concession even though they do not satisfy the age criteria referred to earlier. No charges are imposed by the Local Authority for providing transport in such cases but such provision may have to be withdrawn at short notice.

Assembly Learning Grant (Further Education)

Learners aged over 19 on or over on the 1st September 2008 may also be eligible to apply for an Assembly Learner Grant to help with course related costs. Application packs are available from Student Support (see section 10 below) or direct from individual FE colleges.

Further details can also be found on the following website:

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

8. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

8.1 Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

It is recognised that some young people (aged 16 – 19) from low income households need extra support and encouragement to continue in education after school leaving age, in order to make the best of their learning and development opportunities.

An EMA is therefore an incentive allowance paid to eligible young people who stay on at school or college after school leaving age, who attend regularly and who achieve learning goals.

For further information please contact 08456013636 or visit the EMA website:

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

8.2 Assembly Learning Grant (Further Education)

Learners aged over 19 on or over on the 1st September 2008 are eligible to apply for an Assembly Learner Grant to help with course related costs. Application packs are available from Student Support (see section 10 below) or direct from individual FE colleges.

Further details can also be found on the following website:

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

8.3 Concessionary Fares

Concessionary Travel Passes are provided by a Joint Passenger Transport Unit consisting of Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen Councils. With further financial assistance from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), a pass gives elderly and disabled residents of the relevant council areas a free Bus travel on virtually all registered local bus services throughout Wales.

Students would be eligible for a bus pass if they are a permanent resident of Torfaen and qualify under one of the following categories, including any person who:

is aged 60 or over;

is registered blind or partially sighted ;

is profoundly or severely deaf ;

is without speech;

has a disability, or has suffered an injury, which has had a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to walk;

has a learning difficulty;

has been refused a driving licence, or has had a driving licence revoked on medical grounds and ;

If a disability is such that a person requires a companion to travel with, then the companion may also be entitled to a 'companion' pass.

If you are eligible for a concessionary bus pass and require an application form please contact your local council office (01495 762200) or telephone the Gwent Joint Passenger Transport Unit on 01495 355444 or by E.mail – Michele.mitchell@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

If you think you may qualify due to a disability, then you should contact Torfaen Customer Care on 01495 762200, who will arrange for an you assessment to be undertaken.

Other concessionary fares may also be available and students should contact the bus companies listed in section 10.1 for further details .

9. TRAVELLING TIMES

Pupils attending one of the Authority's schools and who are in receipt of a season ticket are entitled to travel on public services at the beginning and end of the normal school day. In certain circumstances, when a pupil in receipt of a season ticket needs to travel to or from school at a time other than the beginning or end of the school day, schools can issue a pass entitling the pupil to free travel on any available service bus.

Students attending Coleg Gwent can use their season tickets to travel free of charge before 7.00pm Monday – Friday, with a late pass being available from the college for students who need to travel after 7.00 (Monday -Thursday) and at concessionary rates (child fare) at all other times.

10.0 USEFUL CONTACT ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

10.1 Torfaen County Borough Council - Education Department:

Access and Opportunity Team

- For details on transport **Entitlement** and **Procurement** Learners / parents / carers should contact Torfaen Council, details as follows:

Address: Access and Opportunity Team, Education Department, County Hall, Cwmbran, NP44 2WN

Telephone Number: 01633 648119 / 648263

Fax Number: 01633 648164

Email address: elizabeth.burns@torfaen.gov.uk
nicola.shuck@torfaen.gov.uk

Information on transport and related issues can also be found on the Authority's Web-site, details as follows:

Web-site address: www.torfaen.co.uk

Student Support Services

Address: Student Support , Education Service, County Hall, Cwmbran, NP44 2WN

Telephone Number: 01633 648121/2

Fax Number: 01633 648164

Email address: student.support@torfaen.gov.uk

10.2 Joint transport Passenger Transport Unit (JPTU)

The GPTU is the authority's jointly owned public transport procurement arm for both commercial and subsidised routes. They also co-ordinate community transport functions. The Unit can be contacted for bus time table enquiries, details as follows:

Telephone Number: 01495 355440

Email address: michele.mitchell@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

10.3 Traveline Cymru

Traveline Cymru is a service which provides impartial information about all public transport provision throughout Wales . It also provides national rail and coach timetables for the whole of the UK.

For further details contact Traveline Cymru are on 0871 200 22 33 or on their website - www.traveline-cymru.org.uk.

When phoning this number you will be transferred to a bilingual call centre. Calls cost 10p per minute and lines are opened between 7am and 10pm.

10.4 Coleg Gwent

Coleg Gwent is the largest Further Education college in Wales offering a wide range of courses.

The college has 1 site within Torfaen situation in Pontypool and 5 other sites situated within the Greater Gwent area, these being in Abergavenny (The Hill), Crosskeys, Ebbw Vale, Newport and Usk (main headquarters) .

Further details on the range of courses provided at the different sites are available from the Coleg Gwent website, details as follows:

Web-Site: www.coleggwent.ac.uk

Further contact details are as follows:

General College

Telephone number: 01495 333333

Fax number: 01495 333526

E.mail address: info@coleggwent.ac.uk

The majority of Learners attending Coleg Gwent will receive either a Travel Grant or a Season Ticket , details of which are available from Torfaen Council (see 10.1 above). Some learners may however be provided with ' contracted ' transport if they are unable to access public transport due to their Additional Needs eg wheelchair provision.

These contracts do however vary from year to year depending on demand. All enquiries on such provision should be addressed to the Education Department (see 10.1 above).

10.5 Bus Companies

Most Learners are provided with season tickets to travel on public service transport provided by the following companies:

Stagecoach In SouthWales (Red and White)

Stagecoach in South Wales provide transport throughout the Torfaen and Greater Gwent area accessing all main educational establishments . Further details on routes and timetables are available from:

Telephone Number: 01633 485118

Fax Number: 01633 865299

Web-Site: www.stagecoachbus.com

E.mail address: south.wales@stagecoach.com

Newport Transport:

Newport Transport provide transport in and around the Newport area and has regular bus services particularly to Coleg Gwent – Newport Campus. Further details on routes and timetables are available from:

Telephone Number: 01633 670563

Web-Site: www.newporttransport.co.uk

10.6 Cycle Routes

Details of cycle routes can be obtained from the Countryside Team , Torfaen County Borough Council, County Hall Cwmbran, NP44 2WN

Telephone Number: 01633 648329



SECTION 11 - PUBLICATION OF STATEMENT

Torfaen's policy statement for learners aged 16 – 19 will be distributed to all 'partners' (listed on in section 12) which includes all secondary schools within the area.

The statement will also be sent to all public libraries and will also be available on the Authority's website (www.torfaen.gov.uk)

Further copies can also be obtained from the access and opportunity Team (see 10.1 for contact details)

SECTION 12 - APPENDICES

12.1 List of 'partners' consulted

The following are the 'partners' consulted during the production of the Authority's Transport Policy Statement for Learners aged 16-19 2008/9:

Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School
Llantarnam Comprehensive School
Fairwater High School
Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw
St.Albans RC High School
Coleg Gwent
Student Support (Torfaen County Borough Council)
Highways & Transportation (")
Young Peoples Partnership (")
Steve Davies 14-19 Pathways Advisory Officer (Torfaen County Borough Council)
Joint Passenger Transport Unit
Torfaen Training
Diocesan Director of Education - Monmouth Diocese
Roman Catholic Diocesan Director of Schools and Colleges
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Monmouth County Council
Newport City Council
Caerphilly County Borough Council