

## Responses to consultation on East Sussex County Council's proposed Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2025-2026

Comments were sought on any aspect of the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/26

Thirteen respondents left comments on the consultation. The results are as follows:

- 1) A parent contacted me to say that she had enquired about the HE4 bus for her Y11 son who in September hopes to join our Sixth Form. ESCC told her that as it is a closed bus it would cost her £1,132.20 per academic year. She was extremely upset when she contacted me. I was amazed we want our young people to stay in education and this mother does not know how she would pay this amount to keep her son in education.

Why are sixth formers not taken into account on school transport.

- 2) The link in page 6 to request a vacant seat in East Sussex doesn't work.  
I need to do this for my child attending Beacon sixth form otherwise I can't get her there as I'm a teacher myself.  
Please advise on who I need to contact.  
Many thanks
- 3) I would like reassurance we will be able to purchase a seat on the school coach for our daughter when she moves to Beacon Academy sixth form in September '25, but I understand we cannot request this until the end of term in July '25?.
- 4) We live in quite a remote location and as of September 2025 will have 2 children in Beacon Academy in years 7 and 10 and one in Beacon 6th form. As we have 3 children all attending the same school, I wondered if it is possible for transport for our children to and from school, either from our home address or from a nearby location, to ease pressure on personal transport arrangements? Look forward to hearing from you.
- 5) As a younger pupil, many people are left stranded in isolated areas such as Rotherfield and Groombridge as there is no buss connecting them to Crowborough where shops, Waitrose is for many parents and schools. The flexi buss is also not an option for under 18s so there is little solution.
- 6) Transport should be free for under 18.
- 7) Would be useful to send out what's available as a document to all parents of secondary school age before they need it. I.e turn 16yrs

Would also like more generalised support towards travel costs as parents just about managing still don't get support for their children financially. This can make it hard to access further education for some.

Support should also go beyond 4 months turning 18. This disproportionately impacts children born early in the school year so they miss out of a whole year's discounts on travel.

Also this consultation paper is quite vague and open so having. One directive questions may encourage parents and young people to actively give feedback

- 8) The current public transport services for students who attend Varndean college and live in Lewes and surrounding area is quite frankly appalling. It can take up to 1.5 hours to get there (one way). There needs to be a direct bus service from Lewes to Varndean starting as soon as possible.
- 9) Is there a way the Council or the Government can pressure the train operators to acknowledge that most 16-17 year olds are still in education and/or training and therefore should be eligible for a child fare. It's ridiculous that they consider 16-17

year olds adults and as such the train fares to and from sixth form college is prohibitively expensive to many families.

- 10) As a parent in Ringmer with one child at Varndean College, another with an accepted place and a third who is likely to choose Varndean in three years, I would like to express my frustration that there has never been a way in which children from the Lewes area have been able to get to Varndean without using two buses, going via Brighton City Centre. This means our child has to often leave very early in the morning (6.30) and often arrives back rather late in the evening, meaning they are exhausted. I have heard anecdotal evidence from other parents as to how difficult their children find the trip to and from Varndean, and that some children choose to go to East Sussex (Lewes) College not because it's their first choice, but because of the stress of travelling to Varndean.

I would therefore ask ESCC to negotiate with the Brighton Bus Company, Compass Travel, Varndean School and Varndean College, Brighton and Hove City Council, and whoever else they need to to see if some provision could be put in place for parents of children going into Varndean from east of Brighton.

Thank you.

- 11) There is no support for bus fares for my son going to 6th form for me as a single parent with limited capacity for work and work related activities and on UC. My son has received free school meals through school. Why is nothing available how am I meant to pay this. It is a legal requirement now that my son attend college not a choice therefore just as at school free bus passes should be available
- 12) Why do post 16 (A-Level) students have to pay for a seat on the same bus service they have had free from year 7-11? They are getting on at exactly the same village stop, getting off at exactly the same school, carrying on in full time education for a further 2 years to complete their A-levels but are now subject to a £188 termly fee!? It makes no sense.
- 13) Ringmer does not provide a local 6th form provision. Therefore my daughter will need to travel by bus to access her next education placement.

It is a requirement to stay in education between the ages of 16-18 and there are considerable costs in meeting this expectation, not least the cost of travel and independence.

Contribution towards the cost of travel is invaluable in ensuring all pupils have fair access regardless of SEN and income. ESCC need to help establish a level playing field for all pupils who need to travel to access 6th form and equivalent.