

## Education Transport & Awards 2010/2011

Please direct parents to our website [www.essex.gov.uk/educationawards](http://www.essex.gov.uk/educationawards) for full information on all our awards, some of which they can apply for online.

### Free School Meals

Did you know that in the region of only 70% of families living in Essex, who are entitled to free school meals, actually apply for them?

If you can, in any related literature you produce, please ensure that all of your families are made aware of the qualification criteria so that every family who is entitled has the chance to claim free school meals. Free School Meals are awarded to a household for all statutory full time pupils as well as sixth form students. The qualifying benefits are:

- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based)
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit with an income below £16,190 (no Working Tax Credit)
- Asylum Seekers with a supporting letter from the Home Office
- **There is currently no entitlement for families receiving any amount of Working Tax Credit**

During the Autumn term 2010, we are hoping to issue a poster campaign. Posters and flyers will be provided to all Children's Centres and infant, junior and primary schools in Essex promoting free school meals. The flyer will also be included in the school offer packs for the 2011/2012 admission round. We hope that this will ensure that all parents are aware of the entitlement criteria and will be encouraged to apply for free meals if they think they qualify.

Any schools (excluding academies) for whom we do not currently administer free school meals can join our scheme free of charge if they wish to handover administration. Please email our team mailbox [educationawards@essex.gov.uk](mailto:educationawards@essex.gov.uk) for further information.

### Home to School Transport

Are all of your families aware of the home to school transport policy? If you have any children that you feel would qualify but have not yet applied please direct them to our website as above for further information on our policy and how to apply.

The policy of the County Council is to provide free transport for children up to the age of 8 (years R to 3) who live two miles or more and children over 8 years old

who live 3 miles or more from, and attend, their designated or closest school. In all other circumstances it remains the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child attends school and to discharge the responsibility to transport or arrange transport as necessary. Home to school transport is also provided to a child's designated or closer denominational school providing they reside the required distance from the school and are baptised into the faith of the school. At secondary school age there is currently a charge of £330 for this provision.

There are also low income policies for both primary and secondary schools providing extended rights to free school transport:

Under the statutory low income policy for primary schools, a child must still be attending their designated or closer school but the minimum distance requirement for transport remains at 2 miles once a child reaches age 8 (year 4) instead of increasing to 3 miles.

Under the statutory low income policy for secondary schools, children can attend one of their three nearest available secondary schools, providing they reside between 2-6 miles.

- Low Income families are defined as those being entitled to free school meals or in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credits (no reduction for level of income) with an annual household income below £16,190.

A transport information flyer is provided in the school offer packs for reception and year 7 admission each year.

### **Post 16 Transport**

Does your school have a sixth form unit? If so, are your students aware of the Post 16 policy? Please can you direct sixth form students to our website if you feel they meet the criteria below:

- Aged between 16-19 and attending a full time course at a school, college or further education unit and
- Living three miles or more from the nearest establishment offering the majority of the course they are going to study

A contribution of £485 towards the cost of travel is required unless your parent or carer receives Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance (income based), Income Related Employment Support Allowance, Pension Guarantee Credit or Child Tax Credit/Working Tax credit and have a total annual household income of less than £16,190.

Please feel free to visit our website – [www.essex.gov.uk/educationawards](http://www.essex.gov.uk/educationawards) for all entitlement information. Alternatively, please ask parents to call 0845 603 2200

and ask for Education Transport & Awards if they do not have access to the internet.

### **Travel Training**

Essex County Council has a very successful travel training team, with specialist trainers that are able to work with student's who have behavioural difficulties, physical difficulties and additional needs to enable them to use public transport services. We can help prepare participants for travel on any specific journey – perhaps to work, school, further education or a training opportunity. Help is also available on walking routes.

Please call 01245 437767 or visit [www.travel-training.co.uk](http://www.travel-training.co.uk) for more information and to request a referral.

We are actively increasing the number of referrals made from our transport assessment team, both for entitled and non entitled children. If you feel you have children that would benefit from travel training and the increased independence this can give please contact our travel training team on the number above.