



## Young Persons' Free Bus Travel

### Communication to parents

Dear Parent/Guardian,

#### Free bus travel for young people in Scotland

I am writing to update you on an exciting new scheme which is due to launch on 31 January 2022. From this date all young people living in Scotland aged between 5 and 21 years will be eligible for free bus travel within Scotland.

Due to the current COVID-19 mitigations this new scheme will be introduced gradually over the coming months and we will initially only accept application forms for pupils who will require their card to make essential journeys from 31 January 2022. All other eligible applicants will be encouraged to apply at a later date when the situation with the pandemic has improved.

#### What does this mean for your child?

Your child will be able to access free bus travel on registered bus services across Scotland including a very limited number of local cross-border services from the south of Scotland into northern England.

#### How will my child obtain free bus travel?

Young people aged between 5 and 21 years old will need to apply for a National Entitlement Card or a Young Scot National Entitlement Card (Kidz Kard). You can apply for a card directly by visiting <https://getournec.scot/nec/> or you can apply through the school, by selecting one of the 3 forms highlighted below which are assigned to age groups.

If you apply directly to <https://getournec.scot/nec/> you should not apply via the school. Using the online, self-service website at <https://getournec.scot/nec/> is the quickest and surest way to get your travel-enabled card. If you cannot use the website please contact East Ayrshire Council's Customer Services by emailing: [nec@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:nec@east-ayrshire.gov.uk).

If you are applying via the schools you should complete the online form for your child's age group. The forms will be available on the school website from Wednesday 12 January 2022.

You have the choice of three forms.

- **Form 1** if your child is aged between 5 and 10 years old. This form allows you to apply for a Kidz Kard for your child. You can opt to have the free bus travel element. Please note there is no requirement for your child to have their photograph on this card.
- **Form 2** if your child is between the age of 11 and 15 years old. This form allows you to apply for a National Entitlement Card for your child. The form gives you the option of having the free bus travel element added. It also allows you to have the Young Scot branding added to your child's card. This will give your child access to the Young Scot information services and discounts and special offers in Scotland, the UK and some European countries. For further information about the Young Scot branding please go to <https://getournec.scot/nec/>
- **Form 3**. If your child is aged 16 and over they can apply for the National Entitlement Card themselves. They can choose to add the free bus travel element and the Young Scot branding. This will give your child access to the Young Scot information services and



discounts and special offers in Scotland, the UK and some European countries. For further information about the Young Scot branding please go to <https://getyournec.scot/nec/>. They can also opt to have the PASS Hologram added to their card. This hologram acts as a proof of age for your child.

The forms will be available on your child's school website from Wednesday 12 January 2022. You or your child should only apply at this time if you require the card to make essential journeys from 31 January 2022. Applications received up to the 14 January 2022 will be processed immediately. Applications made after the 14 January 2022 will be included in the next phase and depending on COVID-19 mitigations we anticipate that these will be processed timeously.

### How will my child's card work for free travel?

Your child's card will have an electronic chip inside it. When a child gets on a bus, the bus driver will ask them to tap the card against a card reader. The card reader will tell the bus driver if the child has free bus travel enabled on their card or not.

Children under 16 years old will need their parent/guardian to apply on their behalf and provide approval for free bus travel to be enabled on their child's card. This request for approval is included in forms 1 and 2 above.

Young people aged 16 years and over will be able to apply for free bus travel themselves. This request for approval is included in form 3 above.

Children under 5 years old can already travel on buses for free. They will not need to apply for a card.

### What happens when I complete the form and give my approval for my child to receive a Card with free bus travel?

Once you have given approval, the school will arrange for a card to be issued to your child/children.

### By agreeing to my child receiving a card and free bus travel what does it really mean?

By giving your approval, you will be agreeing to your child receiving a card which entitles them to free bus travel.

It will allow your child to travel for free on any registered bus service operating across the whole of Scotland, as well as a very limited number of local cross border services from the south of Scotland into northern England.

### What happens if I change my mind and want to stop my child having free bus travel?

If you change your mind at any time while your child remains under 16 years of age, you can apply to have the free travel product removed from your child's card. If you have applied for the card via the school you should contact the school your child attends to have the travel element removed. If you have applied for your card via <https://getyournec.scot/nec/> and wish to have the travel element removed you should contact East Ayrshire Council's Customer Services by emailing [nec@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:nec@east-ayrshire.gov.uk).



### **My child already has a National Entitlement Card. How do arrange for the Free Travel element to be added.**

You will need to apply for a new card either by completing one of the above forms which will be available on the school website from Wednesday 12 January 2022 or by going direct to <https://getyournec.scot/nec/>

### **Additional Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

#### **Why haven't you advertised the scheme?**

We want all 5-21 year olds living in Scotland to benefit from free bus travel. However given the situation with the pandemic, we do not want to heavily market the scheme at a time when people are being actively discouraged from travelling unless they really need to. That said, it is important that children and young people who rely on the bus for essential travel such as to work, where they can't work from home, or for the purposes of education, care and health and so on are able to apply to access free bus travel from 31 January. That's why we have made information available on how to apply. The national marketing campaign will follow in due course.

#### **Why are you launching the scheme at a time when there are additional Covid19 restrictions?**

We want all 5-21 year olds living in Scotland to benefit from free bus travel. In particular at this time it is important that those who rely on the bus for essential travel such as to work, where they can't work from home, or for the purposes of education, care and health and so on are able to apply to access free bus travel from 31 January. Scottish Government advice regarding the pandemic should be followed at all times.

#### **Will Council offices be able to process in person applications given the situation with the pandemic?**

Applications can be made online at <https://getyournec.scot/nec/> or via the forms highlighted above that will be available on the school website.

#### **If applications are open, why are people being encouraged not to apply for the scheme?**

It is important that we all do our bit to stay safe and protect our NHS. Therefore we are encouraging people not to travel unless it is essential. However, we recognise that many children and young people under the age of 22 still have to make essential journeys by bus and it is important that they can still apply to access free bus from 31 January, recognising that not travelling is not an option for them.

#### **I don't want to throw away my old National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot NEC. Can it be recycled?**

Yes it can. If you are getting a new card and would like your old one to be recycled, please send it to: Transport Scotland Card Recycling Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road Glasgow G4 0H