

Kent 16+

Travel card

Code of Conduct

kent.gov.uk/post16travel

Introduction

By submitting an application for a Kent 16+ Travel Card you agree to abide by this code of conduct.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards we expect young people to meet when they are using public transport. The Kent 16+ Travel Card (K16+TC) is a partnership between the County Council, the Kent bus operators, schools, colleges, or work-based learning providers. It is a new approach to reflect changes in education and funding for post 16 studies and to contribute to full participation in education and training for all 18 year olds by 2015. It is expected to lead to more young people using public bus services while they further their studies. It is therefore important that we do not let any incidence of bad behaviour by K16+TC holders jeopardise the success of our scheme and that we take strong action to exclude any young person found to be acting unreasonably either by damaging the vehicle and/or affecting the safety, security and comfort of their fellow passengers.

The K16+TC is a non-statutory travel scheme subsidised by Kent County Council. After they have paid the appropriate yearly fee, eligible learners can make unlimited travel on most bus services operated by participating bus operators. By applying for a K16+TC, learners agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct, the bus company's Conditions of Carriage, and are also made aware that the K16+TC may be confiscated should they behave inappropriately. This document is designed to provide practical guidelines for learners and to set out our disciplinary procedure.

The vast majority of learners behave well when travelling on buses; however, the bad behaviour by a small number is a cause for concern for other passengers, bus operators, schools and parents. Bad behaviour can be dangerous, and KCC takes this issue seriously. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide a framework to help learners manage their own behaviour and thereby create a safer environment for everyone.

This Code of Conduct outlines the roles that parents/carers, learners, transport providers, schools, colleges, work-based providers and Kent County Council can play to ensure bus travel is safe and welcoming for all passengers. The Code of Conduct also identifies categories of misbehaviour and explains the actions that may be taken in response to incidents of misbehaviour. These sanctions are designed to be easily understood and easily implemented. Every parent/carer and student will have access to a copy of this Code of Conduct and, for most learners; it will be easy to follow.

Young people from the age of 10 can be held criminally responsible for their misbehaviour. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) means that the Police, Community Wardens, Police Community Support Officers and other officials may have powers to act and intervene where necessary. Anti-social behaviour includes vandalism, bullying, or any other type of disorderly behaviour.

This Code of Conduct applies to all learners who receive a K16+TC from Kent County Council. It is, however, understood that for some learners with particular disabilities, certain elements of the Code may not be relevant. This does not mean that misbehaviour will be accepted, but allows for an individual's circumstances to be taken into account.

Kent County Council wants everyone's journey to be safe, comfortable and incident-free. Please help us to achieve this aim by studying this Code of Conduct and putting it into practice every day.

The majority of K16+TC holders are expected to attend school but reference to schools throughout this code of conduct also includes colleges and work based learning providers.

Key Partners

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in ensuring that their children behave appropriately. Parents are responsible for planning a suitable journey for their child and ensuring that adequate services are available before applying for the K16+TC. Learners should not arrive at the bus stop too early; incidents of misbehaviour are more likely to arise where a large number of learners are congregating for a prolonged period. Parents/carers remain responsible for their children's safety and behaviour whilst awaiting the bus.

Passes are issued as Smart products and should scan when placed against the ticker machine. Non scanning passes will need to be replaced. Parents/carers should ensure that their child has their K16+TC with them and that it is not damaged or defaced. Any student without a valid K16+TC, or money to pay the appropriate fare, will usually be refused travel. Kent County Council will not reimburse parents for any cost incurred when a pass cannot be produced or is not accepted by the driver.

Incidents of misbehaviour may be reported to Kent County Council by the driver/operator of the bus, an Inspector, school staff, other passengers or members of the public. We will respond to each reported incident based on its individual circumstances. It is very important that parents/carers support any action which is taken in response to misbehaviour; it is better to deal with minor incidents early rather than have to take more serious action in the future. In cases where learners are responsible for damage to property, including the vehicle itself, the bus company will hold parents responsible for meeting any costs incurred in repairing the damage. This is in addition to any action taken by the Police.

Learners

A learner's behaviour says a lot about themselves as individuals. Poor behaviour reflects badly on them, their parents/carers, their school and their friends. Whenever a student is in school uniform, they are seen as ambassadors of their school. Any misbehaviour is more likely to be reported to the school if the learners are easily identifiable by their uniform or if they are on a bus which serves a particular school. All passengers have a right to travel in comfort and safety and no student's behaviour should cause offence to anyone else.

Learners should remember that they must arrive for their transport at the correct time, wait in an orderly fashion, show their K16+TC on request and abide by the conditions of carriage applied by the bus operator. Buses are expected to leave on time and will not be able to wait for passengers who are late. Conditions of carriage may prohibit eating and drinking on the vehicle and it should be remembered that it is illegal to smoke on a bus.

Transport Operators, Drivers and Staff

Bus operators are private companies that run bus services on a commercial basis. Each operator has their own Conditions of Carriage that apply to K16+TC holders in addition to the requirements of this Code of Conduct. Learners may have sanctions applied by the bus company in addition to any applied as a result of a breach of this Code of Conduct.

We ask that bus operators report incidents of misbehaviour in order that appropriate action may be taken. Please note that no bus operator is obliged to carry a K16+TC holder, and may ban a student from any or all of their services.

Bus operators must make sure their staff report all incidents of misbehaviour, no matter how minor, in order that appropriate action can be taken. It is unhelpful if a number of incidents are ignored as that demonstrates to learners that unacceptable behaviour is being tolerated. Bus operators will report faulty, non scanning passes to KCC who will then contact the pass holder to arrange a replacement.

Vehicle staff, in addition to having the responsibility for the safety of the vehicle and their passengers are responsible for the day-to-day management of learners travelling on the vehicle. Staff must therefore ensure that they respond to incidents of misbehaviour in accordance with the requirements of this Code of Conduct.

Staff must present a positive image and always act in accordance with the highest professional standards in order to maintain the respect of the passengers.

Schools

Schools play a key role in ensuring that learners remain aware of the need to behave appropriately when travelling between home and school. In some cases, the school curriculum can incorporate many of the points raised in this Code of Conduct.

Schools also have the power to exclude learners from school if they behave inappropriately when travelling between home and school. Schools can provide considerable support if it becomes necessary to investigate serious incidents of misbehaviour and can also suggest approaches to managing behaviour in consultation with bus operators, parents/carers, and KCC, Public Transport.

Kent County Council

KCC, Public Transport is responsible for processing your application and issuing your K16+TC. Any reports of bad behaviour directed to KCC, Public Transport will be followed up and sanctions applied where necessary. Any reports of serious or repeated misbehaviour may result in KCC, Public Transport withdrawing a student's K16+TC, temporarily or permanently.

Key Responsibilities

It is important to remember that we all have a role to play in ensuring that public transport operates safely and comfortably. By ensuring that this Code of Conduct is kept at the forefront of learners' minds, and making swift responses to incidents of inappropriate behaviour, we can continue to ensure that journeys are safe and reliable.

Students should:

- ✓ Look after their pass and ensure that it is replaced if it is damaged or does not scan.
- ✓ Arrive for the bus punctually and with a valid K16+TC or the correct fare
- ✓ Act in a responsible manner when awaiting the vehicle – not congregating in large groups or standing in an unsafe place
- ✓ Board the first available vehicle for which they hold a valid K16+TC going to their destination
- ✓ Show their K16+TC to the driver, Inspector or other official, when asked
- ✓ Occupy seats (on both the lower and upper decks) before standing (if permitted on the vehicle). Standing passengers must do so safely, on the lower deck, rearwards of the driver's cab and must not distract the driver. Bags and equipment must not be placed on seats
- ✓ Remain seated during the journey and do not inconvenience other passengers
- ✓ Comply with all instructions from the driver, Inspector or other official at all times, especially in an emergency
- ✓ Disembark safely and cross roads with care.

Parents / Carers should:

- ✓ Ensure that their child is ready for the transport at the right time
- ✓ Ensure that their child has a valid K16+TC or the correct fare
- ✓ Reimburse the bus operator for fares due when a valid K16+TC was not shown by their child
- ✓ Arrange for a responsible adult to meet their child at the end of the day, where appropriate
- ✓ Co-operate with bus operators in responding to incidents of inappropriate behaviour including meeting the

costs of any damage caused by their child

- ✓ Remind their child of the requirements of this Code of Conduct and the need for them to behave in a safe and responsible manner
- ✓ Ensure that their child is aware of what to do if they lose their K16+TC or if the bus fails to operate.

Bus Operators and Staff should:

- ✓ Ensure that all vehicles are correctly licensed, clean, in a good state of repair and compliant with relevant legislation
- ✓ Ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified, licensed, trained and checked as necessary
- ✓ Act in a professional manner, including being of smart appearance, courteous and punctual, obeying all regulations and not smoking
- ✓ Drive safely and considerately
- ✓ Check all passes on every journey and only allow those learners to travel who hold a valid K16+TC or pay the appropriate fare
- ✓ Report non scanning passes to KCC.
- ✓ Never leave a pupil stranded away from home
- ✓ Provide a point of contact for parents/carers, schools and Kent County Council
- ✓ Report all incidents of misbehaviour and comply with the requirements of this Code of Conduct
- ✓ Comply fully with any investigations undertaken by Kent County Council, the Licensing Authority or Police
- ✓ Process complaints regarding services

Kent County Council Staff should:

- ✓ Ensure that all that all K16+TC applications are processed promptly
- ✓ Monitor the bus services and liaise with bus operators where necessary
- ✓ Process complaints and ensure that appropriate action is taken where necessary
- ✓ Liaise with statutory agencies to ensure that appropriate legislation and regulations are followed.
- ✓ Issue replacement passes promptly in accordance with published timescales when reported as lost or stolen.

Schools should:

- ✓ Have a named contact for all pupil transport matters
- ✓ Supervise learners when alighting/boarding at school
- ✓ Respond to concerns and complaints regarding school transport issues, in conjunction with Kent County Council
- ✓ Regularly raise school transport issues with learners at assemblies, induction events and so on.

The Code of Conduct

We recognise that it is important that all learners are made aware of the behaviour which is expected of them whilst using transport. To do this, we have set out basic expectations of behaviour and what learners must do to comply with the Code of Conduct. All learners who follow this Code of Conduct should have a happy and safe journey between home and school.

Learners who choose not to follow this Code of Conduct will receive sanctions which may include temporary

or permanent bans from travelling. In most cases, learners will receive a warning before any ban is applied; however, in more serious cases, it may be necessary to issue a permanent ban with immediate effect. In the most serious of cases, or cases where it is considered that there has been a breach of the law, it is expected that the transport provider will report the incident to the Police.

The following explains behaviour which we all expect from the young people who receive travel assistance from Kent County Council. Of course, we believe that all young people will want to behave appropriately when away from the family home and we trust that, once learners are made aware of the expectations placed upon them, they will respond positively.

The main points to be remembered are:

“Arrive for the transport punctually and with a valid K16+TC or the correct fare”

Make sure you know the time that the bus is due to arrive – be there on time! Make sure you have your K16+TC and that it is not damaged or defaced and scans when presented to the ticket machine. Drivers may confiscate an invalid or damaged K16+TC and require you to pay the appropriate fare. If you do not have your K16+TC, you must pay the appropriate fare. If you use someone else’s K16+TC, or allow them to use yours, it will be treated as fraud. In that case, you may both be refused travel and the Police will be informed. If you need a replacement K16+TC, one can be obtained from KCC, Public Transport upon payment of a fee (currently £10). Please remember that up to three replacement passes can be issued. If your replacement K16+TC is lost, stolen or damaged, you will need to make a new application and pay the appropriate fee.

“Act in a responsible manner when waiting for the vehicle – not congregating in large groups or standing in an unsafe place”

Don’t get there too early, as large numbers of learners congregating in one place can be unsettling for local residents who might be disturbed by excessive noise. More importantly, make sure that you wait in a safe place and do not attempt to board the vehicle until it has come to a halt. Remember that pushing and shoving will not help you get to your destination any sooner and will only cause delays; it is also very dangerous. Of course, if you arrive too late, you might miss the bus. In some cases, where there is only one service per day, you will have to make other arrangements to travel that day.

“Board the first available vehicle for which you hold a K16+TC”

It is important that you board the first available vehicle going to your destination. This will ensure that you can get to your destination in good time and will also help to ensure that you can make any connecting service where this is necessary. If you deliberately miss the first bus, you may find that later services are already full and you may not be able to get on.

“Show your pass to the driver, Inspector or other official on demand”

All learners who travel by bus should have a valid pass for the journey and it is part of the driver’s duty to inspect passes regularly. Sometimes, there will be Inspectors on the bus who will also want to check passes. This helps us to monitor the number of learners travelling to ensure that vehicles are not overloaded and that only learners who are entitled to travel are doing so. You cannot rely on the driver to remember that you usually have a K16+TC and let you onto the vehicle if you do not have it with you when asked. Learners who travel on the wrong vehicle, or without a valid K16+TC, may be banned from travelling.

“Occupy seats (on both the lower and upper decks) before standing (if permitted on the vehicle). Standing passengers must do so safely, on the lower deck, rearwards of the driver’s cab and must not distract the driver. Bags and equipment must not be placed on seats.”

Whilst on the vehicle, sit quietly and ensure that bags and possessions are stored in a safe place e.g. under the seat or in a luggage rack. Do not block aisles or gangways. On buses, it is a legal requirement that you stand away from the driver’s cab and do not distract him/her. Anyone who distracts a driver, either by talking/shouting or by attempting to interfere with the controls, is putting the safety of all passengers at risk.

“Remain seated during the journey and do not inconvenience other passengers”

Whilst travelling, remain seated and try not to make too much noise or otherwise cause inconvenience to other passengers. Do not put your bag or feet on the seats. If you do need to stand, do so in a safe place. Remember that the law applies to you when you are on a bus in the same way as if you were in any other public place. Do not damage the vehicle, light fires, write graffiti or act in any way that will cause damage. Many vehicles may be fitted with CCTV and evidence obtained may be admissible in a Court of law. Any person found to be responsible for damage will be reported to the Police in addition to any action taken by the bus company and Kent County Council. Any damage caused must be paid for.

“Comply with all instructions from the driver, Inspector or other official at all times, especially in an emergency”

Sometimes it may be necessary for drivers to instruct learners to sit in a particular seat or to leave the vehicle at a different stop. In an emergency, the driver will know exactly what to do and will give you clear instructions. For your own safety and the safety of others, it is very important that you follow those instructions carefully.

“Wear seatbelts, where fitted”

Some buses are fitted with seatbelts for your safety. It is important that you wear the seatbelt and ensure that it is not damaged. Report any damaged belts to the driver. Remember that if you refuse to wear your seatbelt, the driver may refuse to allow you to travel.

“Disembark safely, at the correct stop, and cross roads with care”

Do not try to get off the vehicle until it is safe to do so. Wait until the vehicle has stopped before you stand and then leave the vehicle in an orderly manner. Remember to take all your bags and equipment with you and do not leave any litter behind. Do not get off anywhere other than at the correct stop. After leaving the vehicle, do not walk across in front of it; the vehicle may move away suddenly and without warning. Cross only at a safe place, using pedestrian crossings where possible. Don't run!

Responding to the breaches of the code of conduct

To ensure that good behaviour can be maintained, drivers must report all incidents of misbehaviour to their supervisor/manager who will forward details to KCC, Public Transport. All bus operators are provided with 'Incident Forms' which enable incidents to be reported accurately and promptly. All reports are followed up and staff at KCC, Public Transport, in consultation with colleagues at the Education Office, will decide what action to take. In most cases, we will discuss the matter with the bus operator and may seek to involve the school in determining the appropriate action to take. The response to misbehaviour will take into account the particular circumstances surrounding the incident and, in particular, the extent to which the safety and welfare of others may have been jeopardised. We will also consider the age of the student, whether other learners were involved and whether the student has misbehaved whilst travelling before. Parents/carers will always be notified when there has been a report about their child's behaviour on a vehicle.

It is our intention that all sanctions should be applied fairly and consistently. Similarly, learners should be aware that sanctions will be applied and will be applied swiftly. In most cases, there will be a warning before a student receives a ban from the bus or has their K16+TC withdrawn. There will, however, be cases where an immediate ban is applied. If a student's K16+TC receives a ban from the bus, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to make alternative arrangements for their child to travel, including paying any fares which will not be reimbursed.

It is important to remember that the driver may not observe every incident of misbehaviour but will report all that are observed. Learners are expected to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and any consequences of misbehaviour. Therefore, excuses such as "I wasn't the only one doing it" or "I only hit them because they hit me" will not be accepted as justification for misbehaviour.

We know that parents will want to support us in trying to ensure their child behaves appropriately and we

seek their support in reinforcing those sanctions at home. Where a student is banned from travelling, either for a fixed period or permanently, the child's parent/carer will become responsible for making alternative arrangements for their child to travel. Any such arrangements would be at the parent/carer's own expense.

Bus operators should co-operate with Kent County Council in any investigation. In addition to the above, bus companies have, in accordance with their conditions of carriage, legal powers to refuse anyone from travelling on their services.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct are dealt with in accordance to their seriousness and we have therefore identified four separate categories of misbehaviour. To promote fairness and consistency, sanctions will be applied depending upon the category of misbehaviour which is identified.

Category 1 – Nuisance or offensive behaviour

This includes irritating and unpleasant behaviour which, whilst not necessarily a threat to safety, may significantly impair the comfort of others including:

- X Failing to respond appropriately to the driver or inspector, such as refusing to show a K16+TC or pay the appropriate fare
- X Eating or drinking on the vehicle
- X Smoking
- X Spitting
- X Using foul or abusive language
- X Making excessive noise
- X Putting your feet on the seats

Category 2 – Dangerous behaviour

This includes behaviour which may present some potential or actual threat to the physical safety of others and includes:

- X Standing on the vehicle steps or in the doorway
- X Leaning out of the window or door
- X Harassing or verbally abusing other passengers or the driver
- X Bullying
- X Running around inside the vehicle or climbing on seats

Category 3 – Destructive or very dangerous behaviour

This category includes behaviour which causes or has the potential to cause physical injury to others or damage to the vehicle, such as:

- X Fighting
- X Threatening physical violence to other passengers or the driver
- X Throwing objects around or out of the vehicle
- X Breaking windows
- X Interfering with the operation of the doors or emergency exit
- X Graffiti, including etching glass
- X Spraying aerosols
- X Damage to seats, seatbelts or other equipment
- X Indecent Exposure

Category 4 – Highly dangerous or life-threatening behaviour

This category includes behaviour which is likely to cause serious injury to others and includes:

- X Physical assault on the driver or other passengers
- X Lighting fires including igniting aerosols
- X Threatening physical violence with a dangerous weapon
- X Interfering with the vehicle controls

As mentioned overleaf, each reported incident will be dealt with on its own merits. However, the course of action to be followed when considering the sanction to be applied will follow the procedures described below.

Category 1

First incident: The bus operator submits a written report to KCC, Public Transport. After discussion with the bus operator, school or other party if necessary, may give a **written warning** to the student via their parent/carer. The school and transport provider also receive a copy of the warning for their information.

Second incident: As above except that the warning is a **final warning**.

Third incident: The student is issued with a **fixed period ban** from using their K16+TC for up to one week.

Fourth or subsequent incidents: The student is issued with an **extended ban** from using their K16+TC of up to one month, the duration of the ban being determined on the nature of the misbehaviour.

Category 2

First incident: The bus operator submits a written report to KCC, Public Transport. After discussion with the bus operator, school or other party if necessary, may give a **written warning** that the student might receive a ban from the vehicle if behaviour doesn't improve. The school and transport provider also receive a copy of the warning for their information.

Second incident: As above except that the warning is a **final warning**.

Third incident: The student is issued with a **fixed period ban** from using their K16+TC for up to two weeks.

Fourth or subsequent incidents: The student is issued with a **fixed period ban** from using their K16+TC for up to two weeks.

Category 3

First incident: An **immediate fixed period ban** from using their K16+TC of up to one week whilst any further

information is collated. This might lead to an **extended ban** from using their K16+TC of up to two terms. KCC, Public Transport, after discussion with the bus operator, school or other party if necessary, may give a **written warning** that the student might receive a permanent ban from using their K16+TC if behaviour doesn't improve.

Second or subsequent incident: An **extended ban** or a **permanent ban** from using their K16+TC may be applied.

Third incident: a **permanent ban** from using their K16+TC may be applied.

Category 4

First incident: An **immediate fixed period ban** from using their K16+TC of up to one week whilst any further information is collated. This might lead to an **extended ban** or a **permanent ban** from using their K16+TC.

Second or subsequent incident: a **permanent ban** from using their K16+TC may be applied.

Other Useful Information:

Lost/Stolen/Damaged passes

If you lose your K16+TC, or if it is stolen or damaged/defaced, you will need to pay for a replacement. You must contact KCC, Public Transport immediately on the following number: **03000 41 84 84**

An administration fee of £10 will be charged for a replacement K16+TC. You will be liable to pay any fares until your replacement K16+TC is received. No fares, or other costs incurred whilst awaiting your replacement K16+TC, will be refunded. Only three replacement pass can be issued per scheme year; thereafter you may make a new application at KCC's discretion and the appropriate application fee will apply.

Adverse weather or school closures

Notice of school closures due to adverse weather or other special circumstances are usually broadcast on local radio, so you should make sure that you listen out for any information. The Headteacher of the school will usually decide in advance if a school should not open due to bad weather, heating failure etc. or if the school needs to close early. The school should always try to give parents/carers and bus operators as much warning as possible, although sometimes decisions have to be made immediately.

Bus operators are advised to use their discretion in bad weather. If they believe that part or the entire journey might be hazardous and might put the safety of passengers at risk, they will reserve the right not to operate the service. Bus operators should use their best endeavours to provide information in such circumstances.

Further information about the scheme is available at: www.kent.gov.uk/post16travel

Phone: **03000 41 84 84** or email: kent16plustravelcard@kent.gov.uk

16+ Travel Card Kent County Council, Public Transport, PO Box 441, Aylesford, ME6 9HJ

