Young Persons' Free Bus Travel
Information and Guidance for Parents of Secondary School Children

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Free bus travel for young people in Scotland

We are writing to update you on an exciting new scheme which is due to launch in the New Year. From 31st January 2022, all young people living in Scotland aged between 5 and 21 years will be eligible for free bus travel within Scotland.

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 (card) or a Young Scot National Entitlement Card (card).

The card has 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.

Young people aged 16 years and over will be able to apply for free bus travel themselves.

When can parents or young people apply for free bus travel?
A national marketing campaign will begin in January 2022. It will provide advice on the date in January 2022 when applications will open.

Will I be able to apply before January 2022?
It is not possible to apply for a card before January 2022.

How can I apply?
Please visit https://getyournec.scot/ to apply for a card with travel or to amend/replace a current card to include travel. A parent or guardian must apply on behalf of children aged 5 to 15 years old and provide approval for the travel element. 16 to 21 year olds can apply by themselves.

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.

If your child is eligible and choses to receive a Young Scot National Entitlement Card, they will also have access to other local and national services and opportunities. See Young Scot National Entitlement Card | Young Scot for more information.

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 it is a Young Scot National Entitlement Card, they will still have access to Young Scot services and opportunities.

Who do I contact if I change my mind and want to stop my child having the free travel offer?

You can do this online at getyournec.scot or by contacting Scottish Borders Council, customeradvice@scotborders.gov.uk or by calling 0300 100 1800

What should I do with my child's existing card if I stop my child having the free travel offer?

Secondary school children need their card for cashless catering purposes so cards should not be destroyed until you receive a replacement card unless cashless catering is not applicable.

Will Covid impact the delivery of this scheme?

The expectation is that the scheme will be delivered as planned. However with the impact of the new Omicron variant yet unknown, the processing and production of cards may be affected.