

# **Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme**

## **Handbook for schools**

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## About the scheme

Nearly one million children and young people between 5 and 21 living in Scotland can now benefit from free bus travel. It's part of the Scottish Government's plan to build a fairer, greener society. For more information about the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme, visit [freebus.scot](http://freebus.scot)

The Scottish Government continues to work with partners at the Improvement Service – who is accountable for the NEC Scheme - and National Entitlement Card Programme Office – who is responsible for the management of the NEC and support local authorities with the application process – and Young Scot to deliver the scheme. The scheme is operated by Transport Scotland who pay bus operators for each journey made. Each journey is recorded electronically, which is why young people need an NEC or Young Scot NEC to travel.

## Who is eligible

Every 5–21 year old living in Scotland for more than six months of the year can travel for free by bus, no matter their nationality. They must have a valid National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot NEC that is in good working order. The photograph on the card must look like them if it includes a photo.

Children aged under 5 years do not need to apply for a card as they already travel for free on commercial bus services across Scotland.

## How it works

Children and young people aged 5 - 15 will need a new or replacement NEC or Young Scot NEC before they can hop on board. Parents, guardians or carers of children and young people aged 5 - 15 will need to apply on their behalf.

Young people aged 16-21 can apply for a new or replacement card by themselves. If they have an active NEC or Young Scot NEC already, they can collect free bus travel onto their card using the Transport Scot Pass Collect app. This means they won't need to apply for a new card to access free bus travel.

## Getting a card

There are different ways to apply for the scheme - including online, through local councils and using the app. Some schools may also be offering a bulk application service for students.

Applicants will need to provide proof of their identity, address, and relationship (for applicants aged 5-15). Find out more about [what is needed to apply](#) on [freebus.scot](http://freebus.scot).

Once an applicant has successfully applied they should allow at least ten working days for their card to arrive.

Those under 12 don't need their photograph on their card. Those aged 11 can request a card with a photograph ahead of their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. For those aged 11+, it's their choice whether to apply for a Young Scot NEC or a standard NEC. Young Scot offers discounts, rewards, membership and can be used as proof of age. Find out more at [young.scot/card](https://young.scot/card).

## Applying online

Apply for free bus travel by going to [getyournec.scot](https://getyournec.scot) and selecting 'Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme'.

## Applying through the council

[Get in touch with your local council](#) to find out about the different ways which are available to apply for free bus travel in your area.

## Using the app

Those aged 16-21 who already have an active NEC or Young Scot NEC, can download free bus travel onto their card using the Transport Scot Pass Collect app. (Active cards have a long number next to the ITSO logo and, if there's a date of birth shown, it will be highlighted with a pink strip.) Remember, the app lets people collect free bus travel on an existing card, but they still need their card to travel.

The app can be downloaded on the App Store or Google Play. Follow the instructions to read the card and download free bus travel. When they place the card at the back of the phone it's important to make sure they hold it in the right place – this is usually at the top for iOS and in the middle for Android.

The app can also be used by anyone to 'read' a card to see what products are stored on the card. For [help with using the app or understanding any error messages](#) visit [freebus.scot](https://freebus.scot). You can also watch a [video on how to use the app](#).

## Using a card

Once the young person has their card they'll be able to travel on most buses across Scotland. There are few that aren't included in the scheme such as premium fare services, sightseeing buses, cross-border services and dedicated school buses.

Young people should remember:

- To make sure they have their card with them whenever they want to take the bus – otherwise they'll have to pay for their trip

- That it's their card and only their card – their friends can't borrow it.
- To take good care of their card – if they forget it or it gets damaged and doesn't work, they'll need to pay the fare.
- To make sure their photo is up to date and looks like them. No filters please!

## Travelling safely and responsibly

Please remind young people that it's important to stay safe while travelling and to be responsible passengers. They should:

- Find a seat quickly and if there are no seats, hold on to a rail.
- Put bags between their feet or on their lap, and keep feet off the seats.
- Give the driver plenty of time when they ring the bell before their stop.
- Ask the driver when they get on if they need to know when it's their stop.
- Take extra care when travelling at night.
- Make sure someone knows where they are, that they know their route and be aware of everything that is happening around them.
- Cooperate with the driver and treat them and other passengers with respect.
- Remember not to distract the driver when they are driving unless they see something that's not right – a safety issue affecting them or a passenger.
- Make sure they are the only person that can hear their music.
- Make sure they pick up all their litter.

## Contacts, information and help

### More information and frequently asked questions

For more information about the scheme, visit [freebus.scot](#). Visit our website to read the FAQs about:

- [Getting a card](#)
- [Using a card](#)
- [Staying safe](#)
- [Using the app](#)

## Contact us

- For online applications, contact [getyournec.scot](#) or [parentsportal.scot](#) (for any applications made through Parents Portal).
- For applications made through the council find [your local council and their contact details](#) on our website.
- For enquiries about the app or any questions about the scheme, contact [Transport Scotland](#) by email