

Residential Bursary Funds Policy 2026-2027

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Person Responsible	Vice Principal Information and Learning Resources
Approval/review bodies	Senior Leadership Team
Frequency of Review*	12 months

*Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require

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Mar 2021	Student Financial Support Coordinator and Residential Coordinator	Annual Review
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Apr 2022	Student Residential Manager	Annual Review
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Mar 2023	Student Bursary Coordinator	Annual Review
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Related policies/documents:

16-19 Bursary and Free College Meals Fund Policy;
 16-19 Care to Learn Policy;
 19+ Adult Skills Fund Learner Support Policy (non-London boroughs);
 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Policy; and
 19+ GLA Discretionary Learner Support Policy (London boroughs).

1. Policy Statement

North Kent College (“the College”) is a multi-sited Further Education institution. The College provides accommodation to support students to fully engage in their course and related activity, including early morning and late-night duties.

The College administers a 16-18 Residential Bursary Fund (“RBF”) that is provided by the Department for Education (“DfE”). RBF is part of the wider suite of 16-18 student financial support funding. For students aged 19+, the College also administers a 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary.

Residential bursary funding aims to support individual students to overcome financial barriers to participate in specialist educational provision. At Hadlow that specialist provision is land-based education.

The College distributes all bursary funding to learners in accordance with Statutory Funding Guidance.

2. Eligibility Criteria

For RBF, students must be 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026. (Students aged 19 or over may also be eligible if they are continuing a study programme, they started aged 16-18 (19+ continuers) or have an Education Health Care Plan (“EHCP”) and meet the funding criteria set by the College. The income threshold is currently set at £29,000 net including all benefits, this is subject to change if funds are available.

Students must meet the DfE residency criteria in [the Governments post 16 funding regulations](#).

Students who are 19+ must meet the criteria for the bursary support fund applied for (19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary) as well as the residential accommodation criteria as set by the College. Please note there is no residential accommodation funding from the 19+ Education Support Fund or the 19+ Greater London Authority fund.

Dependent upon the fund applied for, the relevant income, either the student’s or the household income, must be below the threshold set by the College (evidence of income will be required) (Income threshold is currently set at £29,000 net including all benefits, this is subject to change if funds are available):

- 2.1. for students who live with their parents, household income means the income of the parent(s), guardian(s), and/or the parent’s partner(s) that they live with (irrelevant of the students age);
- 2.2. for students who live independently from their parents: household income is the student’s own income, plus the income of any co-habiting partner, where relevant; and

- 2.3. for a Child in Care or a Care Leaver, a status letter from the Local Authority must be provided.

Household income includes any income from employment or self-employment and income from any state benefits received. These include (but are not limited to):

- 2.4. Income Support ("IS");
- 2.5. Job Seekers Allowance ("JSA");
- 2.6. Employment Support Allowance ("ESA"); or Incapacity Benefit ("IB");
- 2.7. Pensions (private and state) and State Pension Credits;
- 2.8. Universal Credit; We will use the figures from Universal Credit statements for salary or self-employment income.
- 2.9. Housing Benefit; and/or
- 2.10. Council Tax Benefit;
- 2.11. Carer's Allowance;
- 2.12. Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independent Payments; and/or
- 2.13. Other income.

Disability Living Allowance ("DLA") and Personal Independence Payments ("PIP") and disability elements of Universal Credits are not included in the calculation of household income. However, evidence of these benefits is still required to consider the individual circumstances.

The student must be enrolled on a full-time **Land-Based** study programme at Hadlow.

The same study programme must not be available at an alternative education provider nearer to the student's home.

The student must be on campus for early morning and late evening duties as an integral part of the study programme and/or have a complex journey to Hadlow and/or it takes more than two hours daily to get to and from Hadlow (for **Land-Based** courses).

Meet the College's income criteria. (Income threshold is currently set at £29,000 net including all benefits, this is subject to change if funds are available).

Continuing students as defined in section 5.1 of this policy will be assessed against the current income threshold plus 4% (£30,160 net).

When applying for funding, students are required to provide full evidence of the relevant income before a bursary application can be assessed. The Residential Bursary Funds are limited, and awards are made with priority on date of receipt of the completed

application with all required evidence.

An award for residential accommodation from the Residential Bursary Fund for 16-18-year-olds or 19-24-year-old students who have an EHCP, will cover all but £25 of residential accommodation fees for eligible students. Any residential award cannot be used towards the accommodation deposit, booking fee or other fees/costs. If additional funding is awarded towards course costs, this cannot be used towards the residential fees.

Students who qualify for Free Meals in Further Education will follow the residential meal plan, and this will be reflected in their fees and bursary allocation if they choose to take up this entitlement.

Students on apprenticeships or Higher Education courses **are not** eligible to apply for a residential bursary.

An application for a residential bursary does not guarantee that an award will be made.

A bursary award for accommodation **does not** guarantee accommodation will be offered and the Residential Accommodation Team will assess the student's suitability to reside on Campus.

3. Residential Accommodation Contract

All residential students must sign a residential contract, which states that if a student leaves their course after the first six weeks following enrolment, prior to completion or leaves their accommodation for any reason, then they are liable for the balance of any fees from the date on which the student vacates their accommodation until the end of the term during which the student has withdrawn.

The Residential funding, irrelevant of the funds the payments come from, will stop at the date of their withdrawal from their accommodation.

An academic term is defined as autumn, spring, and summer.

4. Residential Bursary Payment

Residential Bursary award payments for accommodation are made directly to the student's landlord, which is North Kent College. No payments are made directly to the student.

All residential bursary funding stops if a student ceases to be resident in their accommodation, for any reason. All fees due from the date of the student ceasing to have residential status to the end of that term must be paid by the student/parent/guardian, as set out in the Residential Accommodation contract and the Bursary Terms and Conditions.

An academic term is defined as autumn, spring and summer.

5. Raising Awareness and the Application Procedure

The College has information on its website from April for the following academic year and information is marketed around the College. New applicants and returning students are sent a notification of the financial support available and the application process. The College works with local authorities and agencies to support students accessing financial support.

The College has a single, online, Student Bursary application form which covers all bursary funds. The online application form is available on the College's website after the Easter half-term for the following academic year. Bursary awards **do not** automatically carry-over from one year to the next, and students will need to make a new application for each academic year. Online applications help reduce our impact on the environment, however, paper applications are available from the Student Bursary Team.

Along with their application, students must provide full evidence of household income for the current tax year. Where financial circumstances have changed from the previous year, an explanation must be included on the application form. This will be considered when the application is assessed.

Applications submitted without **full** evidence of household income **cannot** be assessed and, in those circumstances, the Student Bursary Team will contact the student to explain what is required. This will delay the processing of the application and may impact its success, as the fund is finite and once all funds are awarded then subsequent applications will be declined.

Students continuing at College for another year should apply by 15 May for an award for the following academic year. New applicants to the College are encouraged to apply before enrolment and, at the latest, by 1 August. Fully completed applications received by these dates will be assessed before the student enrolls; this will ensure that students who are awarded a bursary are notified before enrolment day, and will, therefore, be aware if they need to make additional payments at enrolment.

Applications will be accepted after these dates, subject to funds being available. For complete applications received by 1 August, we aim to assess these within 10 working days and will inform applicants if the assessment will take longer. Applications received after 1 August or incomplete applications, may take up to 30 working days to assess once complete. Students, will remain liable for any costs accrued at enrolment until an award has been confirmed in writing by the College.

The outcome of the assessment will be communicated to the student via their personal email held on the College records before enrolment. After enrolment, all further bursary correspondence will be sent via email to either their personal email address and/or their college email address.

Students, will remain liable for any costs accrued at enrolment until an award has been confirmed in writing by the College.

Application forms submitted without supporting documentation will not be processed. If applications are received without the required evidence, the Student Bursary Team will attempt to contact the applicant three times, via email. With a final reminder being sent by email. Copies of all correspondence sent regarding the Bursary can be found on the student Bursary portal along with the student's application. If no response is received from the final letter within 14 days, the application will be closed.

Bursary applications remain open throughout the academic year but, as funds are limited, early application is recommended.

Where a residential student's circumstances change in the year, they should contact the Student Bursary Team to discuss the financial support available. An award may still be made depending on the student's personal circumstances and funding availability.

Fully Completed Applications are assessed and awarded in the following order:

- 5.1 Continuing students returning for their second year of a two-year land based programme for whom travel by public transport is more than two hours to and from the College each day:
- 5.2 continuing students, who are continuing onto the next level of their previously undertaken Land Based Course, for whom travel by public transport is more than two hours to and from the College each day and undertaking a Land-Based Course;
- 5.3 new and continuing students (who are **not** continuing onto the next year or level of existing Land Based Course) for whom travel by public transport is more than two hours to and from the College each day and undertaking a Land Based Course; or
- 5.4 new and continuing students undertaking early and late starts/finishes as required by their Land-Based Course.

6. Student Commitment

The student commitment is detailed in the student residential accommodation contract which states that the student is liable for all residential fees including bursary funds, from the date they vacate the accommodation until the end of term, if they leave Hadlow for any reason after six weeks in residence.

Note: All bursary funds cease on the day the accommodation is vacated by the student.

Awards are given the understanding that the student maintains an attendance level of 90% or above (in all courses including Maths and English). If the student's attendance falls below the required 90% the residential bursary payment for the relevant month will

be reduced in line with the student's percentage attendance for the month. All attendance is checked monthly between the 18th of the previous month and the 17th of the current month when the payment is due. If the attendance is below 90% the monthly residential bursary allocation will be reduced in line with the attendance and the student/parent/guardian will be liable for the short fall / difference.

Bursary funding is not an entitlement and is earned by the student's satisfactory attendance at lessons and duties and their academic performance and conduct. The College reserves the right to request repayment of full residential fees from the student or their guarantor in the following circumstances*:

- 6.1. they leave the College before completion of the course of study;
- 6.2. their attendance falls below the required 90% without good reason;
- 6.3. they give deliberately misleading or false information; and/or
- 6.4. they are asked to leave following disciplinary procedures.

Consideration will be given to mitigating circumstances such as safeguarding or child protection concerns, family illness, caring responsibilities or any other issues affecting the student's personal circumstances.

** Legal action may be taken to recover monies owed to the College.*

7. Appeals

In the first instance, the student (or their parent/guardian) should contact the Student Bursary Coordinator and ask for a re-assessment of their situation. If the student is still not satisfied with the outcome, an appeal must be made, in writing, within two weeks, to the Director of the MIS and Admissions. The appeal must clearly state why the award should be re-considered. The student may be asked to provide additional information or be invited in to discuss their individual circumstances as part of the appeal. If they are unhappy with the outcome of their appeal, they should follow the College's Complaints Procedure [here](#).

8. Fraudulent Claims

It is the College's duty to protect public funds from the possibility of fraudulent claims. The College asks for detailed information and may invite applicants for interview so it can distribute the funds correctly. If the student's claim is considered fraudulent, i.e., through false representation of household income or other eligibility rules, during spot checks or auditing processes, the College will request that the funds awarded to them be repaid in full. If the student fails to repay this, the College may take legal action.

An application found to be fraudulent, i.e. through false representation of household income or other eligibility rules, may be cancelled and the learner may be subject to disciplinary measures by the College. The College will have the right to recover the monies awarded. The Government guidance advises that

institutions that identify significant fraud should report it to the Department of Education.

9. Data Protection

College employees involved in administering the residential bursary funds will comply with the College's policy on storing and transferring information during application and payment of funds.

This policy is correct at the time of publication. The College reserves the right to amend residential bursary fund information to reflect revisions in guidance made by funding providers.