

Residential Bursary Funds Policy 2023 - 2024

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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

Review History:		
Date	Reviewed by	Reason for review
Mar 2021	Student Financial Support Coordinator and Residential Coordinator	Annual Review
Aug 2021	Student Support & Residential Manager & Head of Student Support	Annual Review
Apr 2022	Student Residential Manager	Annual Review
Jun 2022	Student Bursary Coordinator	Review
Mar 2023	Student Bursary Coordinator	Annual Review

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Related policies/documents:

- 16-18 Bursary Fund Policy (includes Free Meals Policy);
- 19+ Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Fund Policy;
- Residential Fees Policy;
- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Bursary Fund (Non-London Boroughs); and
- 19+ GLA Discretionary Lerner Support Bursary Fund (London Boroughs).

1. Policy Statement

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

The College administers a 16-18 Residential Bursary Fund ("RBF") that is provided by the Education Skills and Funding Agency ("ESFA"). RBF is part of the wider suite of 16-18 student financial support funding. For students aged 19+, the College also administers a 19+ Discretionary Bursary Fund, a 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary and a 19+ GLA (Greater London Authority) fund.

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. This also includes Motorcycle courses as a specialist provision.

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 2023. (Students aged 19 or over may also be eligible if they are continuing on 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.

Students must meet the ESFA 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+ Discretionary Bursary Fund, 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary or 19+ GLA funding), as well as the residential accommodation criteria as set by the College

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):

- 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):

- Income Support (“IS”);
- Job Seekers Allowance (“JSA”);
- Employment Support Allowance (“ESA”);
- Tax Credits;
- State Pension Credit;
- Universal Credit;
- Housing and Council Tax benefit;
- Personal Pension; and/or state pension
- Carer’s Allowance

Disability Living Allowance (“DLA”) and Personal Independence Payments (“PIP”) and disability elements of Tax Credits are not included in the calculation of household income. However, evidence of these benefits is still required.

The student must be enrolled on a full-time Land Based or Motorcycle 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, late evening or weekend 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). In the case of Motorcycle courses students must live more than 20 miles away from Hadlow Campus.

Meet the College’s income criteria.

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. For students 19+ who DO NOT have an EHCP, the maximum of 80% towards accommodation costs will be awarded, subject to available funding. 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.

Those students who are residential and 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 for 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 winter, 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.

Any and 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 winter, spring and summer.

5. Application Procedure

The College has a single online Student Financial Support application form which covers all bursary funds. The online application form is available on the College's website in April for the following academic year. Bursary awards do not automatically carry-over to the following year and students must make a new application for each academic year.

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 these circumstances, Student Support will contact the student to request further

information or evidence. This will delay the processing of the application and may have an impact on the success of the application, as the fund is finite and once all funds are awarded then subsequent applications will be declined.

Students who are eligible for progression at College can apply for a bursary in the final term of their current academic year. Applications will be assessed and the outcome communicated to the student prior to the enrolment period.

Prospective students should apply for bursary support when they make their application for accommodation.

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 Student Support to discuss financial support available. An award may still be made depending on the student's personal circumstances and funding availability.

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 made on the understanding that the student maintains an attendance level of 90% or above (in all courses/subjects). 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 on a monthly basis 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(s)/Guardian(s)) must 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 Head of MIS and Admissions. The letter must clearly state why the award should be re-considered. The student may be asked to provide additional information or be invited to discuss their individual circumstances as part of the appeal.

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 are repaid in full. If the student fails to repay this, the College may take legal action.

9. Data Protection

College employees who are involved in administering the residential bursary funds, comply with the College's policy on the storage and transfer of information during application and payment of funds.

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