

## 16- 19 Care to Learn Policy 2025-2026

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

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#### Related policies/documents:

16-18 Bursary and Free College Meals Fund Policy.  
 19+ Adult Skills Fund Learner Support Policy (non-London boroughs).  
 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Policy.  
 19+ GLA Discretionary Learner Support Policy (London boroughs); and  
 Residential Bursary Fund Policy.

## 1. Policy Statement

North Kent College (“the College”) is a multi-sited Further Education institution. North Kent College administers funding on behalf of the Care to Learn (C2L) Scheme to assist young parents with childcare funding. This funding is paid to the college by the Secretary of State for Education.

C2L provides funding for childcare to help young parents (defined as those aged under 20) continue in education after the birth of a child. The scheme provides funding for childcare whilst the young parent is engaged in a study programme and is not able to provide care for their child. It can also help the young parent with any additional travel costs involved in taking the child to the childcare provider. C2L can also provide funding for childcare whilst young parents are on work placements, where these are a defined part of the study programme.

## 2. Student Eligibility Criteria and Award

For the student to be eligible for Care to Learn funding they must meet the following criteria:

The young parent must be under 20 years old on the date they start their study programmes. Young parents who become 20 years old during their study programme can continue to get funding to the end of that specific study programme, so to the end of the same programme at the same level.

The young parent must be the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the Child(ren) for whom they are claiming Care to Learn. If a young parent loses custody of their child(ren), even temporarily, they must notify the college immediately. The mother or father can claim C2L as long as:

- 2.1 the other parent is unable to provide childcare, for example, they are also in education or are absent; or
- 2.2 the other parent is not claiming childcare paid through any other source, for example, government funded early years places or Childcare Tax Credits.

Young parents must be living and studying in England to receive C2L.

A London weighting applies to the scheme. The London weighted maximum is £195 per child per week (the national rate is £180 per child per week). Eligibility for London weighting is determined by the young parent’s home address and applies to the following Boroughs:

Barking and Dagenham	Islington
Barnet	Kensington & Chelsea
Bexley	Kingston-Upon-Thames
Brent	Lambeth
Bromley	Lewisham
Camden	Merton

Croydon	Newham
Ealing	Redbridge
Enfield	Richmond-Upon-Thames
Greenwich	Southwark
Hammersmith & Fulham	Sutton
Haringey	Tower Hamlets
Harrow	Waltham Forest
Havering	Wandsworth
Hillingdon	Westminster
Hounslow	

### 2.3 Residency

Students must also meet the Residency Criteria in DfE funding rules (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision>).

Accompanied asylum seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)

Asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. If they are destitute, they can apply to the Home Office (HO) for suitable housing and cash for essentials, but they are not eligible for other income.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

UASC do not receive cash support from the HO and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups (in-care group), where they have a financial need.

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, institutions must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour, the local authority must provide them with the same support and services as they do care leavers. As such, they continue to be eligible for a bursary as a student from a vulnerable group until they reach the upper age limit.

When an asylum claim is not supported, the individual may not be able to claim to stay legally in the UK. When asylum claims have been fully heard/the appeals process exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds (with a few exceptions where the withdrawal of support would be seen as a breach of human rights).

### **3. Study Programme**

The students study programme must be funded directly from public funding.

#### **3.1** The types of study programmes eligible are:

- 3.1.1 GCSE's, A Levels and BTEC's;
- 3.1.2 Non-accredited day sessions and short programmes such as First Aid, Healthy Eating, and Parenting;
- 3.1.3 FE study programmes in Higher Education (HE) institution, including access courses and diplomas; and
- 3.1.4 Foundation HE courses where they are followed at an FE institution, for example, a BTEC diploma

#### **3.2** The following study programmes are **not** eligible for C2L:

- 3.2.1 privately funded education, so an institution where students are required to pay tuition fees
- 3.2.2 voluntary work that is not a required part of an agreed study programme
- 3.2.3 apprenticeships, because apprentices are paid by their employer
- 3.2.4 HE courses in an HE institution or FE institution, including courses leading to a first degree, HND, HNC diploma in HE, foundation degree or initial teacher training
- 3.2.5 Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQ's), except for the very small number of young parents aged 19 but under 20 doing a HTQ funded by an Advanced Learner Loan
- 3.2.6 Social activities/groups where no actual programme of study takes place

Any instances where a young parent is still looking after their child, for example, while they are undertaking a study programme with a childcare provider and the child is still with the parent

### **4. Study Programme duration**

C2L will provide help with childcare costs for the duration of the student's study programme. Where students are enrolled on non-accredited, community-based courses like parenting and healthy eating, C2L is only payable for a maximum of six months in the academic year. This reflects that these courses are designed for short term use to provide a particular set of skills or knowledge and/or to give the young parent the confidence to progress to other education or training.

## **5. Study time, work experience and industry placements.**

Students can claim C2L for independent study time where it is required as part of their study programme to complete coursework undertake revision or homework. The amount of independent study time that is appropriate must be agreed between the college and the student.

C2L will support time needed to undertake work experience and industry placements but only where these have been identified as an integral part of the study programme.

Costs associated with independent study time, work experience and industry placements will be included as part of the C2L weekly maximum. (£180 per child per week or £195 per child per week in London) and these costs are not extra.

## **6. Childcare provision**

C2L will only pay for childcare provision that is appropriately registered with Ofsted and must be registered in one of the following ways:

on the early years register with either Ofsted or a childminder agency

On the compulsory and/or voluntary part of the general childcare register with either Ofsted or a childminder agency

Offered by schools (who are exempt from Ofsted registration for children aged 2+) such as school run breakfast and after school clubs, and holiday care.

If general childcare provision is not suitable for the child, then the college will give consideration for a specialist provision.

As part of the application process the childcare provider must supply evidence that they are Ofsted Registered with a rating of 3/Secure or above.

Where the childcare provider is related to the child, the childcare provider must:

**6.1** live apart from the child;

**6.2** be providing registered childcare for other children who are not related at the same time as the child they are related to; and

**6.3** be Ofsted registered.

## **7. Travel Payments**

As part of the funding C2L can contribute towards travel for the student, if it is necessary for the student to take their child(ren) between childcare and home. Travel payments are only paid if they are additional to the student's normal travel

costs from home to the College. If the childcare is based on the way to or on site of the college then no additional travel can be claimed.

Any travel claims will be part of the childcare costs (maximum allocation will not be exceeded) and must be the cheapest option. If travelling by car (not private taxi) the rate used will be 25p per mile.

### **7.1 Deposits and Registration fees**

C2L will pay a maximum of £250 per child if the childcare provider requires this. Deposits will be paid from the C2L funding. C2L will also pay a registration fees charged by the childcare provider, up to a maximum of £80 per child. These are one-off payments that will not be included as part of the weekly maximum and cannot be paid in future academic years if the student uses the same childcare provider.

### **7.2 Summer retainers**

The College can pay summer retainers to childcare providers, if required to hold the childcare place over the summer holiday period. This only applies if the student is finishing study in one year and continuing their study in the next academic year. The young parent must still meet the eligibility criteria for this to be paid.

To be eligible for the summer retainer for summer 2026, the student must:

- 7.2.1 have received C2L funding in the academic year 2025 to 2026 and be intending to return to the study programme in the academic year 2026 to 2027;
- 7.2.2 be on a study programme that has lasted for 6 weeks or more in the academic year 2025 to 2026;
- 7.2.3 be on a study programme that finishes no earlier than 26 May 2026
- 7.2.4 be intending to continue with the same childcare provider they used during academic year 2025 to 2026; and
- 7.2.5 have been using the childcare provider for a minimum of six weeks

C2L can pay the summer retainer for a maximum of eight weeks, and this cannot be more than the C2L weekly maximum rate.

## **8. Raising awareness and the application procedure**

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

The College has a single, online, Student Bursary application form, which covers all the bursary funds. The online application form will be 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 also available from the Student Bursary team.

Along with their application, students will need to provide full evidence of the student's income for the current tax year and complete the Care to Learn Childcare form along with the childcare provider. Where financial circumstances have changed from the previous year, a note needs to be made on the online application. This will be considered when the application is assessed.

Applications submitted without full evidence of the student's income **cannot** be assessed and, in these 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, subsequent applications will be declined.

Students who are continuing at College for a further year should apply by 1 June 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, the College aims to assess these within ten working days and will inform applicants if the assessment will take longer. Applications received after 1 August or incomplete applications may take up to thirty working days to assess once complete.

The outcome of the assessment will be communicated to the students via their personal email held on the College's records before enrolment.

After enrolment, all future bursary correspondence regarding the bursary will be sent to either the student's College email and/or personal email and if authorised, a parent/ guardian email. A copy of the correspondence sent can also be found on the student bursary portal, along with the application for financial support.

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

Application forms submitted without supporting documentation and evidence will be marked as incomplete and the College is unable to process them. If applications are received without the required evidence, the Student Bursary Team will attempt to contact the applicant three times, via telephone or email and if no response is received a final letter will be sent to the address held. Application forms submitted without supporting documentation will not be processed. Copies of all correspondence sent regarding the Bursary can be found on the student Bursary portal along with the students' application. If no response is received from the final letter within 14 days, the application will be closed.

## **9. Student Commitment**

Awards are made on the understanding that the student maintains an attendance level of at least 90% (in all subjects/courses, including Maths and English), otherwise payments will be withheld/reduced. Their attendance is monitored monthly and the dates viewed are 18th of the previous month to 17th of the current month the bursary is due. In addition to this, a monthly check will be made to the childcare provider to ensure the child is still attending.

If attendance drops below 90% and the payments are withheld/reduced, the student is required to discuss with their tutor the reasons regarding the low attendance.

If the tutor is happy with the reasons (exceptional circumstances only) they must email the Student Bursary Team ([studentbursary@northkent.ac.uk](mailto:studentbursary@northkent.ac.uk)) to request that the withheld/reduced payments be released. Consideration will be given to mitigating circumstances such as: safeguarding, child protection; family bereavement; caring responsibilities; transport issues; For travel payments, the amount will be reduced to reflect the student's attendance. i.e., if the student has only attended 67% of the allocated time, then they will only receive 67% of the monthly residential/travel award. A monthly report is also made to the Secretary of State for Education confirming the students and child's continued attendance.

Funding for students who have not attended for four weeks or more will be stopped, without notice and funding may also be stopped if a student has not adhered to the College's rules.

The College reserves the right to require repayment of funds if it has been funded through any Government grants or bursaries.

## **10. 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 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 invited to discuss their individual circumstances as part of the appeal. If you are unhappy with the outcome of your appeal, you should follow the College's Complaints Procedure [here](#).

## **11. 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.

An application that is found to be fraudulent, i.e., through false representation of household income or of 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. Government guidance advises that institutions that identify significant fraud should report it to the Department for Education.

## **12. Data Protection**

College employees, involved in administering the 16-19 Care to Learn Funds, comply with the College's policy on storing and transferring information during the application process and in payments of funds.