

19+ Adults Skills Funding Policy 2025 - 2026

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Person Responsible	Vice Principal - Information & 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
Aug 2013	Student Services Manager	Policy written
Dec 2014	Student Services Manager	Policy update
Jan 2017	Student Services Coordinator	Policy Update
Feb 2017	Student Financial Support Coordinator	Annual Review
Jul 2018	Student Financial Support Coordinator	Annual Review
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Mar 2022	Student Bursary Coordinator	Annual Review
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Related policies/documents:

16-18 Bursary and Free College Meals Fund Policy;
 16-19 Care to Learn Policy;
 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.

The Department for Education (“DfE”) provides a 19+ Adult Skills Fund which is distributed by the College to help learners who are aged 19+ and in need of financial support to ensure they can attend College and successfully complete their course.

The fund is for:

- 1.1. students who are 19 or over on 31 August within the 2025/2026 funding year;
- 1.2. individual's resident in areas of England outside of devolved authority areas undertaking DfE funded Adult Skills Funding (ASF); and/or
- 1.3. continuing learners who are resident in devolved authority areas, who have not completed their learning by 31 July 2025, but started their learning before the authorities' devolution date with providers who have a DfE agreement (grant) only.

They must also meet the residency requirements, set out in the DfE funding guide, in one or more of the following categories:

- 1.4. UK nationals and other persons with right of abode;
- 1.5. UK nationals in the European Economic Area (“EEA”);
- 1.6. EEA nationals in the UK; or
- 1.7. Other non-UK nationals.

If the student lives within a London Borough, they are not eligible to apply for the College's 19+ Adult Skills Funding support and will be assessed for funding from the 19+ GLA Discretionary Learner Support Fund.

Residential Accommodation funding is not available from this fund.

The Bursary Fund helps remove the barriers that learners from low-income households (currently set at £28,000 net, including benefits (subject to change, should funds be available)) may face by assisting with the costs of undertaking their course . Assistance may be given with essential books, equipment, UK **compulsory** trips, travel,

The College distributes the funds to learners in accordance with the DfE Funding Guidance.

The College reserves the right to make changes to financial support provision in response to Government guidance and other mitigating factors.

DfE guidance is updated regularly and may affect eligibility for funding. Any changes to this policy and financial support guidance will be communicated to all members of the College community at the time of any change.

Student(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s)/partner(s) of students, who are in receipt of any state benefits, must ensure they inform the Department for Work and Pensions (“DWP”) of any learner support they receive from the College, including any Bursary awarded.

Any bursary awarded covers term time only.

2. Eligibility Criteria

Students must:

- 2.1. be resident in areas of England outside of devolved authority areas undertaking DfE funded ASF;
- 2.2. be continuing learners who are resident in devolved authority areas, who have not completed their learning by 31 July 2025, but started their learning before the authorities’ devolution date with providers who have an DfE agreement (grant) only;
- 2.3. be 19 or older on 31 August within the 2025 to 2026 funding year and meet the following residential criteria;
 - 2.3.1. meet the DfE residency criteria (see DfE 19+ ESF Guide); and
 - 2.3.2. not live in a London Borough. A separate fund is available for students living in a London Borough. (19+GLA fund)
- 2.4. If the above criteria are met, then the student can apply for the bursary, but their household income must be below the threshold set by the College (currently £28,000 net including all benefits).

Students on apprenticeships and on Higher Education courses are not entitled to bursary funding and those in receipt of a 19+ Advanced Learning Loan will be assessed for the College’s 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Support Fund.

Awards are made to students whose household income is less than the threshold set by the College. Where the household income has dropped/changed significantly, an award may still be made depending on the student’s personal circumstances. In this case, the Student Bursary Coordinator at the College will make the final decision. This may be in the form of a partial award i.e. assistance with travel only.

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

- 2.5. Income Support (“IS”);
- 2.6. Job Seekers Allowance (“JSA”);
- 2.7. Employment Support Allowance (“ESA”) or Incapacity Benefit (“IB)
- 2.8. Pensions (Private and state) and State Pension Credits;

- 2.9. Universal Credits;
- 2.10. Housing Benefit
- 2.11. Council Tax Benefit;
- 2.12. Working and/or Child Tax Credits;
- 2.13. Carers' allowance;
- 2.14. Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independent Payments; and/or
- 2.15. Other income.

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

When applying for funding, students are required to provide full evidence of the household income before a bursary application can be assessed. Eligibility for a 19+ Adult Skills Funding Bursary does not mean that the student is automatically entitled to an award. The 19+ Adult Skills Fund is a limited fund, and awards are made on a first come-first served basis.

The student's attendance is monitored and any payments due will be reduced if their attendance falls below 90% (in all subjects, including Maths and English). This is monitored monthly, and the dates viewed for attendance are 18th of the previous month to the 17th of the current month the bursary is due.

Adult Skills Funding Bursary awards are tailored to the individual student's needs and will depend on the course they are on and where they live. Bursary awards made may include the following and are only a contribution towards costs and may not cover the full amount required:

- 2.16. the cost of essential books required for the course (as determined by the Head of Curriculum and is a one-off payment);
- 2.17. essential, equipment or uniform required for the course (as determined by the Head of Curriculum) and is a one-off payment;
- 2.18. an award for travel (paid in monthly instalments, in arrears - see below);
- 2.19. trips: this is for UK **compulsory** trips related to the course the student is undertaking. **Not all trips are deemed compulsory.** (Maximum £75 for all trips in any academic year);
- 2.20. support with domestic emergencies (**exceptional circumstances only**). This would only be agreed with the Student Bursary Coordinator, and you may be required to provide further evidence to support any request;

Note: Where students have applied for funding for course equipment or trips, this funding will be made “in kind” where possible or paid direct to the curriculum. If funding is paid to the student by BACS, this will not be paid until the end of November.

All payments will be made from the date of approval and **not** the date the application was submitted.

3. Travel Awards

An award for travel may be made to students who live more than 1.5 miles away from the campus they are studying at. Students must be studying at the College nearest to their home that offers their chosen course.

Travel distances are calculated using Google Maps. The allocation is dependent on where the student lives and how they travel to College.

3.1. A Monthly Travel Payment

A travel payment may be awarded to students depending on where they live and their number of timetabled days. Funding is at the discretion of the College and will consider the discounts available to students and if the student already has support in place from the local authority. Any travel award will only be a **contribution** to assist with travel.

A maximum of £2,500 per academic year can be made.

Discounts are reflected in assessments of funding allocated to students, and the College may contribute to the cost of passes.

Awards for travel will be paid directly into the student’s bank account via a BACS payment, in monthly instalments.

The student remains liable for their travel costs until an award is agreed and reimbursement for travel costs is not paid before an award is agreed.

All payments are made in arrears and under no circumstances will payments be paid in advance.

4. Childcare Awards

Funding for childcare is not available for students aged 20 or over.

Young parents under 20 are not eligible for childcare from this fund. However, they may apply for financial support towards childcare through the Government’s Care to Learn scheme, which is administered by the College. For further information students should. Please see the 16-19 Care to Learn Policy.

5. Tuition fee awards

Tuition fees are **not** covered by the bursary fund.

6. Residential Fees (Hadlow only)

Please see the separate Residential Fees Policy

7. Residential Bursary (Hadlow only)

Residential Accommodation funding is not available from this Fund

8. 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 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 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 apply for each academic year. Online applications help reduce our impact on the environment, however, paper applications are available via the Student Bursary Team.

Along with their application, students will need to provide full evidence of household income for the current tax year. 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 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, subsequent applications will be declined.

Students continuing at College for another 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 10 working days and will inform applicants if the assessment will take longer. Completed applications received after 1 August may take up to 30 working days to assess. 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 correspondence will be sent via email to either their personal email address and/or their college email address.

Application forms submitted without the required supporting documentation will not be assessed. 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.

9. Student Commitment

The student's attendance is monitored and any payments due will be reduced if their attendance falls below 90% (in all subjects, including maths and English). This is monitored monthly, and the dates viewed for attendance are between 18th of the previous month to 17th of the current month, the bursary is due.

Any payments withheld or reduced due to attendance (including residential fees); student(s)/parent(s)/guardian(s) are liable for any shortfall/difference in the reduced monthly payment for the month the attendance falls below the required 90%.

If attendance drops below 90% and the bursary payments are reduced, it is up to the student to discuss with their tutor the reasons regarding the low attendance. If the tutor is happy with the reasons (exceptional circumstances only), then they must email Student Bursary (studentbursary@northkent.ac.uk) to request that the reduced payments are reinstated to the full monthly entitlement. Consideration will be given to mitigating circumstances such as safeguarding, family bereavement and transport issues; e.g. train strikes. For travel payments, the amount will be reduced to reflect the students' attendance. i.e., if the student has only attended 67% of the allocated time, they will only receive 67% of the residential/travel award for the month.

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 Student Charter.

The College reserves the right to request repayment of funds and the return of any equipment purchased through funding. This includes IT equipment, books, uniform and any other equipment purchased or loaned to the student, if these have been funded through financial support.

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 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](#).

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

If an application is found to be fraudulent, i.e. through false representation of household income or other eligibility rules, it 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 DfE.

12. Data Protection

College employees who are involved in administering the 19+ Adult Skills Fund Bursary will comply with the College's policy on the storage and transfer of information during the application process and payments of funds.

This policy is correct at the time of publication. The College reserves the right to amend 19+ Adult Skills Fund Learner Support Policy to reflect revisions in guidance made by funding providers.