



## 19+ GLA Discretionary Learner Support Fund Policy 2025 - 2026

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| <b>Person Responsible</b>     | Vice Principal Information & Learner Resources |
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*\*Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require*

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| Mar 2023        | 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+ Adult Skills Fund Learner Support Policy (non-London boroughs);  
 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Policy;  
 Residential Bursary Fund Policy.

## 1. Policy Statement

North Kent College (“the College”) is a multi-sited Further Education institution.

The Greater London Authority (“GLA”) provides the 19+ GLA Discretionary Learner Support Fund, which is distributed by the College, to help learners who need financial support to ensure they can attend College and successfully complete their GLA funded course.

The fund is for:

students who are 19 or over on 31 August within the 2025/2026 funding year and living in a London Borough

If the student does not live in a London Borough, they are ineligible to apply for the 19+ GLA Learner Support Funding and should apply for funding from the 19+ Adults Skills Funding support or the 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Support Fund.

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

- 1.1 UK nationals and other persons with right of abode;
- 1.2 UK nationals in the European Economic Area (EEA);
- 1.3 EEA nationals in the UK; and/or
- 1.4 Other non-UK nationals.

See [19+ GLA Funding Rules 2025-26](#)

Residential Accommodation funding is not available from this fund

The Bursary helps remove the barriers that learners from low-income households may face by assisting with the costs of undertaking their course (the current income threshold is set at £28,000 net including all benefits, this is subject change should funds be available). Assistance may be given with essential books, uniform, equipment, UK **compulsory** trips, travel. (Childcare for students 19 and under – Please see separate Care to Learn Policy).

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

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

GLA 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.

**Students 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 meet the following criteria:

- 2.1 be resident in a London Borough undertaking GLA funded AEB;
- 2.2 enrolled on an eligible full-time course funded by the GLA aged 19 or over on 31 August of the year they start the course; and
- 2.3 meet the GLA residency criteria (see [19+ GLA AEB Funding rules](#))

If the above criteria are met, the student can apply for the bursary, but their household income must be below the threshold set by the College (currently set at £28,000 net including all benefits).

**Students on apprenticeships and on Higher Education courses are not entitled to the bursary. Students in receipt of a 19+ Advanced Learning Loan will be assessed for the NKC Advanced Learner Loan (bursary) Fund**

Awards may be made to students whose household income is less than the threshold set by the College. Where 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 responsible for the relevant College Campus 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):

- 2.4 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 Credits;
- 2.9 Housing Benefit;
- 2.10 Council Tax Benefit;
- 2.11 Working and/or Child Tax Credits;
- 2.12 Carers’ allowance;

2.13 Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independent Payments; and/or

2.14 Other income.

Disability Living Allowance, 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 must provide full evidence of the household income before a bursary application can be assessed.

Eligibility for a 19+ GLA Discretionary Learner Support Fund does not mean that the student is automatically entitled to an award. The 19+ GLA Discretionary Learner Support Fund is a limited fund and awards are allocated 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 between 18<sup>th</sup> of the previous month to 17<sup>th</sup> of the current month, the bursary is due.

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:

2.15 the cost of essential books required for the course (as determined by the Head of Curriculum and is a one-off payment);

2.16 essential equipment or uniform required for the course (as determined by the Head of Curriculum and is a one-off payment);

2.17 an award for travel (paid monthly in arrears - see point 3);

2.18 trips. This is for **compulsory** UK trips related to the course the student is undertaking. **Not all trips are deemed compulsory.** (Maximum £75 for all trips in any academic year).

2.19 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 applied 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 the number of timetabled days. Funding is at the discretion of the College and will take into account: the discounts available to students or 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.

Students travelling from a London Borough to any of the College's campuses will be required to use their 18+ Oyster Card within the Oyster catchment area, which gives discounted travel. The College may contribute towards the discounted travel amount. If the student is studying at Gravesend, Tonbridge, or Hadlow, additional funds may be awarded towards the onward journey, outside of the Oyster catchment area. The contribution will not exceed the cheapest option for travel to College.

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 before an award is agreed is not paid.

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

### 4. Childcare awards

Childcare funding is not available for students aged 20 or over from this fund.

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, please see the College 16-19 Care to Learn Policy.

### 5. Tuition fee awards

Tuition fees are not covered by the bursary fund.

## 6. Residential Fees (Hadlow Students only)

Please see the separate Residential Fees Policy.

## 7. Residential Bursary (Hadlow Students 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 a notification of the financial support available and the application process. The College works with the local authority 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 on 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 students 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.

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.

## **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 18<sup>th</sup> of the previous month to 17<sup>th</sup> 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%, 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](mailto:studentbursary@northkent.ac.uk)) to request that the reduced payments are re-instated to the full monthly entitlement. Consideration will be given to mitigating circumstances, such as safeguarding, family bereavement, or transport issues e.g. train strikes. 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 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 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](#).

## 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 are 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 DfE and/or GLA.**

## 12. Data Protection

College employees who are involved in administering the 19+ GLA Discretionary Learner Support Fund 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+ GLA Discretionary Learner Support Policy information to reflect revisions in guidance made by funding providers.*