Student Bursaries & Financial Support Policy 2026-2027

Effective for employees, students, governors and volunteers September 2026

Overall responsibility:	Principal
Implementation:	Assistant Principal of Student Services
Date issued:	July 2026
Date for review:	July 2027

Endorsed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team

Date: July 2026

Jason Lancaster

Principal and CEO



Contents

1. INTRODUCTION 3
2. INFORMATION ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA 3
4. ASSESSING ELIGIBILITY 3
5. HELP TOWARDS MEETING COURSE RELATED COSTS 4
6. HELP TOWARDS TRAVEL COSTS 4
7. HELP TPOWARDS MEALS 5
8. HELP TOWARDS CHILDCARE COSTS 5
9. HELP TOWARDS COURSE FEES 5
10. HELP TOWARDS ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT NEEDS (Advance Learner Loan only) 6
11. VULNERABLE GROUP BURSARIES 6
12. MAXIMUM LEVEL OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE 6
13. ADMINISTRATION OF THE STUDENT SUPPORT FUND 7
14. ALLOCATION 7
15. APPEALS 7
16. LINKS TO RELATED COLLEGE POLICIES / PROCEDURES 8
17. Appendices: 8

Appendix 1: FINANCIAL SUPPORT APPEALS FORM 9

Appendix 2: EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT 11

Appendix 3: DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT 13

Appendix 4: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 15

1. INTRODUCTION

Northampton College receives an allocation of funds from the Department for Education (DFE) and the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) to support eligible students to meet the costs of participating in education. The DFE and Adult Skills Fund publish guidelines which set out the criteria for the use of these funds.

- The funds are available through the following schemes:
- 16-19 Bursary Fund
- 19+ Discretionary Support Fund
- 20+ Childcare Support Fund
- Advanced Learner Loan Bursary
- Care to Learn childcare support
- Free Meals in Further Education

These funds are not intended to provide learning support services for example counselling or mentoring or to support extra-curricular activities that are not essential to the student study programme or to provide living cost support.

Eligible students will be required to show supporting evidence that they meet the required criteria. In certain exceptional circumstances, Northampton College may exercise its ability to make discretionary awards where possible.

2. INFORMATION

Northampton College provides information about and promotes access to financial support via the college website, at student inductions and at promotional events i.e. open evenings and school's liaison events.

The application form for financial support is provided via email to every student who has been offered at place at Northampton College.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All students aged 16 and over and who meet the residency criteria set out in national funding guidance and are studying an DFE or Adult Skills funded course are eligible to apply. Waged apprentices and those studying on HNC/HND courses are not eligible.

4. ASSESSING ELIGIBILITY

All applicants will be asked to complete an application form provided to them via email.

All new applicants will be sent details on how to apply for financial support in their pre-enrolment pack. Assistance with completing the application form is available from Student Services.

All financial support is means-tested and applicants will be required to provide evidence to verify total household income. Students applying through the Advanced Learner Loan Bursaries for Additional Learning Support costs ONLY will not be means tested.

Students aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are eligible for the 16-19 bursary. Applicants will be required to provide a copy of an up-to-date EHCP to access support if not already held by the college.

Student with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are eligible for Free School Meals aged 19-24 without income assessment but are required to complete an application form.

Priority for support will be given to those students with a household income of under £30,000 per annum (net).
The college may choose to use its discretion where household income is higher and it is identified that support is needed.

Evidence of household income will usually be Universal Credit statements, or an income based benefit letter. Households not in receipt of any of these are required to provide wage slips and bank statements to evidence household income.

To be eligible for financial support, it is expected that households have claimed ALL funds available to them from other sources. Therefore, if the student is aged under 20 and in full time education **your household should be in receipt of Universal Credit in order to be eligible for support from the Bursary Fund.**

If you have not yet claimed Universal Credit, you would be expected to do so **BEFORE** applying for support from the Bursary Scheme. For more information, visit https://www.gov.uk/welfare

Applicants with savings in excess of £5000 will not be supported unless financial need can be demonstrated.

If your income is higher but you are in hardship you can still apply and your case will be considered, however, a supporting statement and evidence of financial need must be included.

In addition students aged 16 – 19 in defined vulnerable groups are entitled to bursary support of up to £1200 where a financial need and relevant costs are identified (pro-rata according to length of course and hours of attendance). The defined vulnerable groups are:

- Students in the care of the Local Authority including unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- Students leaving care
- Students living independently and in receipt of Universal Credit.
- Students in receipt of Universal Credit (in their own name) and Personal Independence Payments

In some cases, a student might be eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups however, their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant participation costs. **Meeting the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups does not automatically mean funding will be given.**

Students who believe they qualify for this vulnerable groups bursary are required to provide evidence of their care status or benefits as above to support their application.

5. HELP TOWARDS MEETING COURSE RELATED COSTS

The 16 – 19 Bursary Fund, the 19+ discretionary Learner Support Fund and Advanced Learner Loans Bursary may be able to assist with costs where equipment is required to enhance a student's access to learning or to increase levels of achievement.

Assessment of the level of support needed for each programme of study will be carried out in conjunction with information supplied by direct delivery teams regarding course related costs.

Where trips are funded through bursary support, payment will be made through internal college transfers only. Bursary funds cannot be used to support the cost of overseas or foreign field trips where the content can be found within England at a much cheaper cost. Funds are only available for trips where they are an essential part of the student's study programme.

Funds will be made payable directly to the equipment or uniform provider where possible. Where paid to the student, a BACS transfer will be made. **It is not possible to make payments to family members or guardians other than if an applicant to the bursary is formally assessed as not having the capacity to manage their own financial affairs.**

Northampton College supports the purchase of laptops/Chromebooks using 16-18 bursary funds and 19+ discretionary funds, ensuring students have access to necessary technology for their study programme. Any laptop purchased with these funds will be loaned to the student and must be returned at the end of the academic year. These laptops will then be reallocated to other students in need.

Bursary funds cannot be used to pay for replacement student ID badges.

All items purchased by the support funds remain the property of the college and should be returned if students do not complete their course.

6. HELP TOWARDS TRAVEL COSTS

Bursary funds for students aged 16-18 will be administered in conjunction with the West and North Northamptonshire Post 16 Transport Scheme's and Policies. In most cases, Bursary funds will be used to provide additional financial support where transport costs are not met in full by the local authorities' scheme(s) and /or present a barrier to learning.

Support through bursary funds with the cost of travel is available to students who travel more than three miles to their site of study or work placement. A distance of one mile will be used for students in receipt of a vulnerable group bursary. Distance will be calculated using the shortest safe walking distance as identified on Google maps. Students with exceptional circumstances and /or Special Educational Needs who do not meet the requirements of the Local Authority Transport Policy will be considered during assessment and through the appeals procedure where necessary.

Travel support for students aged 16-18 will usually be in the form of a Stagecoach bus pass however the college will exercise discretion on this decision where another provider/ form of support is deemed more suitable or cost effective.

Travel support for students aged above 19 at the beginning of the academic year will be made in the form of a travel award based on distance and attendance levels. Awards will be made to a maximum value of £1000 per academic year, made each half term in arrears.

The college will support transport costs during term time only.

7. HELP TOWARDS MEALS

Students aged 16-18 at the beginning of the academic year who live in a household that is in receipt of one of the benefits below are entitled to access financial support for the provision of meals on the days they attend a full day of study or other activity that is part of their course. (e.g. work experience).

- Universal Credit

- Support under part IV of the immigration an Asylum Act 1999
- Aged 19-24 with a valid EHCP

Qualifying students will be provided with access to a meal in the college food outlets at all sites to the value of £5.00 per timetabled day This award is based on the £2.66 national daily rate and an additional amount of £2.34 awarded from the 16-19 discretionary bursary. Awards are based on attendance which is checked on a regular basis.

Students in receipt of a vulnerable groups bursary who do not otherwise qualify for free college meals are able to request access to the provision of meals in college through the colleges catering facilities. Meals are chargeable at £5.00.

Students aged over 19 at the beginning of the academic year are not eligible to apply for help with free college meals unless they are in possession of an EHCP plan.

Students aged 16–18 who meet the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals, but whose household income exceeds £30,000, may still access the college's 16–18 Discretionary Bursary. In such cases, funding will be limited to additional daily support for Free School Meals provision only, as outlined in this policy.

Applications supported by exceptional circumstances may be considered through the bursary appeals process.

8. HELP TOWARDS CHILDCARE COSTS

Students aged Under 20 – Care to Learn (C2L)

Students aged under 20 at the start of the academic year should apply for support with childcare costs through the Care to Learn scheme. 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 Bursary Scheme application form available on the college website will need to be completed. The Care to Learn scheme is not income assessed although residency conditions may apply. Childcare providers must be registered with OFSTED.

The maximum weekly award for students eligible for Care to Learn is £180 per week. In exceptional circumstances the college may choose to offer additional childcare funding from its bursary funds to students in receipt of Care to Learn scheme funding.
The young parent must be the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the child(ren) for whom they are claiming C2L. If a young parent loses custody of their child(ren), even temporarily, we must be notified immediately. The student can claim C2L as long as:

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

C2L can cover registrations fee or deposits where required by the childcare provider.

All childcare providers wil be paid directly by BACS payment and attendance of both the student and the child is required. Should the student withdraw from the course or cease attending, childcare payments will be withdrawn.

If the students are continuing for a second year on the same course, a summer retainer payment may be applicable, please speak with Student Services.

Further information on the Care 2 Learn Scheme is available HERE.

Students aged Over 20

Students aged over 20 can apply for support with childcare costs through the 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund / Advanced Learner Loans Bursary.

Where funding is awarded towards the cost of childcare with a registered provider, the award will only apply to the days on which the course runs. Funds will be paid to directly to the childcare provider where possible. The third party must be registered with OFSTED and not be graded as “inadequate”.

The amount of funding available for childcare is limited to £5000 per year and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds.

9. HELP TOWARDS COURSE FEES

There are limited funds available to assist with the cost of tuition fees for 19+ learners who are not fully-funded for their course costs.

Students will only be supported where alternative means of financial support are not available and exceptional circumstances can be evidenced.

In exceptional circumstances the college bursary funds may also be help with exam fees. Each application will be considered on its own merit.

Students who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with course fees.

10. HELP TOWARDS ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT NEEDS (Advanced Learner Loan Students Only)

Support through bursary funds with the cost of Additional Learning Support needs is available to students who are formally assessed by the college as needing support with in-classroom learning. Awards are available each academic year to a maximum award value of £1500 per student however the college reserves its right to consider exceptional levels of need/circumstances.

11.VULNERABLE GROUP BURSARIES

Where students are identified as being eligible for a vulnerable group bursary to support participation costs for education, (to a maximum award level of £1,200) they will be awarded support to cover essential course costs including kit, equipment, trips, and travel and meals (pro-rata for courses less than 30 weeks).

The college does not support the purchase of laptops for student ownership using vulnerable group bursaries.

12.MAXIMUM LEVEL OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE

The maximum levels of support for students aged 16-18 are as highlighted below. Student awards are strictly limited to a maximum award level of £5000 per student across all categories.

Age	Level of Income	Equipment	Travel	Trips
16-18	Income under £30,000 *	100%	100%	100%
16-18	Income based benefits	100%	100%	100%
16 -18	Further Education Free Meals available to students who meet published criteria in section 7 of this document.			

Students aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are also eligible for the discretionary bursary.

Students aged over 19 who have previously accessed the 16-18 bursary in the preceding year (second year of a two year course) will be supported using the 16-18 bursary fund.

*Assessed using the earned income figure featured on the applicants Universal Credit statement and their Universal Credit payment in addition. The college will also consider applications from families with a higher income where exceptional need is identified.

The maximum levels of support for students aged 19+ are as highlighted below. Student awards are strictly limited to a maximum award level of £5000 per student across all categories.

Age/Study	Level of Income	Equipment	Travel	Course Fees	Learning Support	Childcare	Trips
19+ FT	Income under £30,000 **	100%	Travel Award	Exceptional Circumstances	0%	100% *	100%
19+ PT	Income under £30,000 **	100%	Travel Award	Exceptional Circumstances	0%	100% *	100%
Advanced Learner Loans recipients	Income under £30,000 **	100%	Travel Award	0%	Maximum award of £1500 per year **	100% *	100%

** Timetabled hours only. Students in receipt of **Early Years Funding** will be expected to use this to cover their timetabled hours.*

*** Exceptional need/circumstances will be considered.*

13.ADMINISTRATION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

All students who have the offer a place, will be informed of how to apply via email.

Students with special educational needs or under the care of the local authority will be offered 1:1 support with completing the application process if requested/required.

All new students will be invited to complete an online application form to allow staff to assess the eligibility for an award.

Applications must be completed and students enrolled before any awards can be made.

Up-to-date, valid, supporting evidence will be requested at the time of application. Staff administering the fund will verify the information given on the application form or ask for further evidence if not sufficient at the time of application.

The nature of any award will be set out in the award email that will be sent to all applicants once their applications have been assessed.

Students will be informed of decisions at the time of processing after a correctly completed application is submitted together with the relevant evidence.

Applications will be reviewed, approved or refused by at least two members of staff in the Student Services team.

The College will monitor students' attendance and conduct in line with its Behaviour and Intervention Policy. Where concerns arise regarding a student's adherence to College expectations, the College reserves the right to review any award that has been granted and, where appropriate, increase, reduce, recover, suspend, or withdraw that award.

Should an applicant withdraw from their chosen course of study and decide to leave college, they may be required to repay monies and / or return equipment supplied/bought by the bursary fund.

Students withdrawing from college prior to their funding eligibility period are required to repay any financial support that has been provided. For full time courses, this is 42 days from their enrolment.

14.ALLOCATION

Applicants will be notified via email of the funding that has been awarded. All awards will be paid directly to the third party where possible, or via internal transfers between college cost centres.

In all cases, the application will be judged on its individual merits as outlined in the DFE and Adult Skills Fund guidelines. The amount awarded will be specific to each individual application.

15.APPEALS

If any student is dissatisfied with the decision regarding their award, they will be advised to complete an appeal form within 5 days of receipt of their award email. They should state clear reasons for their appeal and produce supporting evidence where possible. The appeal once submitted will be reviewed by the **Assistant Principal Student Services**. The appeal will be considered by the Assistant Principal and another manager not involved in the initial decision-making process within 10 working days. Appeal forms are made available via a link on the bursary award email and also digitally on request.

16.LINKS TO RELATED COLLEGE POLICIES / PROCEDURES

- Transport Policy 2025/26

17.Appendices:

- Appendix 1: FINANCIAL SUPPORT APPEALS FORM
- Appendix 2: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT STATEMENT
- Appendix 3: DATA PROTECTION IMPACT STATEMENT
- Appendix 4: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Appendix: 1

Financial Support Appeals Form 2026-27

You have the right to appeal if:

- You believe your application has been assessed incorrectly
- You have **exceptional circumstances** that you wish to be considered. (i.e. medical condition, financial hardship caused by debt relief plan, loss or significant change in employment)

You are unable to appeal if you are simply unhappy with your award. You must meet the essential criteria for assessment or be able to provide evidence of exceptional circumstances. Appeals for additional funding in addition to the maximum award of £5000 per student will not be considered.

Your appeal should be made within 5 working days of receiving either your bursary support meeting or a letter notifying you that you are not eligible for support.

Part 1 – Student Details

Student ID Number:

First Name(s):

Surname:

What are you appealing for?

Bus Pass	☐	Kit & Equipment	☐
Travel Costs	☐	Trips	☐
Tuition Fees	☐		

Part 2 – Appeal Grounds

Please detail below your grounds for appeal including any exceptional circumstances you wish to be taken into consideration.

Evidence of any exceptional circumstances attached ☐

Applicant Signature: Date:

Please return this form to **Student Services** at any college centre. You will be advised of the outcome within 10 working days of receipt of this form. **The decision of the appeals panel will be final.**

OFFICE USE ONLY

Assessment

Does the appeal meet the essential criteria for bursary awards? Yes ☐ No ☐

Is the student able to evidence exceptional circumstances? Yes ☐ No ☐

Outcome of appeal

Appeal upheld? Yes ☐ No ☐

Feedback for student (letter)

Unfortunately your appeal does not meet the essential criteria for bursary awards ☐

Unfortunately your appeal does not provide sufficient evidence exceptional circumstances ☐

Offer Instalments (bus pass and fees only) ☐

Other:

Manager 1:

Date:

Manager 2:

Date:

Appendix: 2

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This template has been designed to help you take action to improve services and practices which affect staff, students and other service users at Northampton College. By completing this template, you would have considered the impact that your policy, practice or service might have on particular social groups within the college community. The exercise will also provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate, where possible, that the College promotes equity, diversity and inclusion.

Once this Equality Impact Assessment has been created, please include on the last page of your policy document.

Policy Details	
What is the policy?	Student Bursaries and Financial Support Policy
Is it new or existing?	Existing
Department	Student Services
Policy Author (postholder title, name)	Mark Owen – Assistant Principal Student Services
Author of Equality Analysis	Mark Owen
Date of completion	01/06/2026

Aim and Objectives
Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the policy
The Policy describes the way in which the college allocates bursary funds to students who meet established criteria.

Policy Assessment				
Consider whether your policy might have an impact on various groups identified within the categories listed below and explain why you have reached this conclusion. Please tick (√) the identified level of impact (positive, negative, or no impact) and provide details of your findings.				
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Findings
Race			x	
Religion and/or belief			x	
Sex (Gender)			x	
Gender Identity			x	

Disability			x	
Age			x	
Sexual orientation			x	
Marriage and/or civil partnership			x	
Pregnancy and/or maternity (including surrogacy and adoption)			x	
Other identified group (e.g. carers)			x	

Action Planning			
How do you intend to mitigate or eliminate any negative impact identified?	If a positive impact is identified, how do you intend to promote or develop this opportunity?	Where negative impact has been identified, can it be justified? If so, explain how.	How do you intend to mitigate or eliminate any negative impact identified?

Monitor and Review	
How will you monitor the impact of your project once it has been put into effect?	
Using data to monitor the impact of bursary funds on the recipients retention and success. College complaints procedures and annual review using student feedback.	
Names and position of Impact Assessment Team (min of 3 preferably from areas across the College):	
Name	**Position**
Mark Owen	Assistant Principal – Student Services
Jan Hutt	Deputy Principal – People and Culture
Julie Kennedy	Student Advisor Welfare & Financial Support
Equality Analysis Sign-Off Signature and Date: July 2026	
Review Date: July 2027	

Appendix 3: DATA PROECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Data Protection Impact Assessment

Does this Policy

- require the collection and use of data in addition that normally collected by the College?

Yes / No (if Yes complete Assessment point number 1)

- require the sharing of data with partners?

Yes / No (if Yes complete Assessment point number 2)

1. Is additional data being collected? If so please detail:

Yes. Details of household income and family/personal finances.

Is data collected personal and/or sensitive?

Yes

How will you collect, use, store and delete data?

Data is collected and stored digitally in a secure area. Data will be destroyed after 7 years.

2. Will you be sharing data with anyone? Please detail what data, with who and confirm a **Data Sharing Agreement** is in place

No

Describe the purposes of the processing / sharing: What are the benefits of the processing/ sharing – for you, and more broadly?

N/A

Consider how to consult with relevant stakeholders: describe when and how you will seek individuals' views – or justify why it's not appropriate to do so.

N/A

Describe compliance and proportionality measures, in particular:
What is your lawful basis for processing?

N/A

How will you ensure data quality and data minimisation?

N/A

What information will you give individuals?

N/A

Please attach a Risk Assessment if there are significant risks to data protection

Signed by Data Protection Officer

Name: Rav Garcha

Date: September 2026

Appendix 5: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Version	Final
Ratified by	Policy & Strategy Group
Date Ratified	01/07/2026
Date Issued	01/07/2026
Expiry Date	01/07/2027
Lead Manager	Mark Owen
Name of Author	Mark Owen
Audience	College Staff, Students, Parents & Carers.
Communication Plan	Document Library, College Website