



KIRKLEES COLLEGE

Kirklees College ***Learner Financial Support Policy 2023/24***

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***Warmly Welcomed and Wanted;
Every Student, Every Day, by Everyone***

PURPOSE

The purpose of Learner Financial Support Policy is to provide a clear set of guidelines to learners, parents/carers, staff and others within the college community, as well as wider stakeholders. The college will discharge learner support funds in line with the relevant funding guidance set out by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to ensure it meets the needs of students.

ETHOS

Tackling inequalities is at the heart of Kirklees College. The main aim of this policy is to ensure adequate, timely support is provided to any student at Kirklees College who is facing financial hardship. Through equitable distribution of the ESFA funding resource, Kirklees College will respond to individual needs to minimise barriers to accessing education. As well as ESFA funding the college is proactive in sourcing other funds available to young people across Kirklees.

SCOPE

All learners are able to apply for financial support, online or via a paper application form and are then assessed according to the eligibility criteria for the relevant funding stream. The policy clearly defines the eligibility criteria for each bursary type to ensure the College meets the requirements of the funding guidance. There are five types of financial support available:

- 16-19 bursary
- 16-19 Free College meals
- Vulnerable Young Person (VYP) bursary
- 19+ Adult Education Budget learner support
- Advanced Learner Loan

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Learner support funding is intended to help students overcome any individual financial barriers to participation to give them the best opportunity to achieve the best outcomes. To ensure finance or lack of resource is not a barrier to accessing education (specific course, retention, attendance and achievement), the college promotes these funds and other sources of financial assistance.

The college complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when setting the criteria for financial support and does not discriminate against students either directly or indirectly because of their protected characteristics.

Key sources of information can be found at the end of this policy.

INTRODUCTION

Financial support applications are taken throughout the academic year. Progressing students are encouraged and advised to apply at the end of the previous academic year or over the summer for the forthcoming academic year. All new students are advised to apply for financial support as soon as they receive their application enrolment link. Students who experience any changes to their personal financial circumstances can apply for financial support at any time throughout the year.

Financial support funds are distributed through the financial support team, to students who demonstrate their financial difficulties to help them remain in Education, money is available under various categories of

support. The college has a strong commitment to supporting students, whilst maintaining the integrity of the financial support awards, through clear assessment criteria.

The college recognises that a student's personal circumstances may lead to them taking a break in learning or withdrawing from their course prior to the expected end date, in these cases funding would cease at the point of withdrawal, or before if there are long periods of absence, and funds will be allocated to another student who is continuing their studies.

Information regarding support funding is made widely available to students through the website, prospectuses and college communication channels such as the VLE and during the induction process. Whilst in college tutors, mentors and support workers advise students and help them to apply for their entitlement. Funds are available for students who provide evidence of their eligibility to access the support. Priority groups, in line with national priorities, are specified within the College policy document.

The financial support department are able to advise and support students with the application form process for student loans (courses level 3 and above). The department recognises that it is **not** a financial advice point, as we are not regulated by financial regulations and therefore cannot assist the student with completing the form. Staff will signpost to other services if required.

Discretionary Support Funds are allocated according to the eligibility criteria set out by the ESFA, and therefore students are required to provide evidence of their household income as part of their application to ensure they receive their learner support entitlement. This evidence is reviewed by the financial support department when assessing applications.

To ensure applications are assessed in a timely manner, it is important that evidence is provided at the point of application by the student / parent/carer, or as quickly, soon after, as possible. Delays to providing evidence will delay the allocation of bursary and may impact on students securing funding.

Applications are assessed on a first-come first-served basis. Online applications are encouraged. Student Finance Officers assess the applications submitted online and in person. Opening times are subject to change depending on the time of year.

Help is also available on telephone (01484 437000) and via email at Finsupp@kirkleescollege.ac.uk.

ELIGIBILITY AND WITHDRAWAL OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

To remain eligible for the bursary, students must follow all College policies and procedures including the student code of conduct. Attendance is checked at specific payment points throughout the academic year to confirm student's ongoing eligibility for support.

The purpose of financial support is to ensure that those wanting to attend college have the financial means to do so. Support funds are Government regulated and the college has an obligation to ensure that they are being used correctly for their intended purpose.

The college has a minimum expectation for students' attendance to be at least 90%. If a student's attendance falls below this level, appropriate support will be put in place and as a final resort their bursary allocation payments may be reviewed following consultation with the Head of Student Experience, curriculum and Safeguarding. The same procedure will apply to those who have been subject to the colleges' disciplinary procedures.

Support may also be withdrawn if it is found that the application for support was made dishonestly or fraudulently. Funds that have been received may need to be repaid. In certain circumstances the college may consider legal action and any action under the disciplinary policy.

Students must inform the financial support team of any changes in circumstances.

The decision can be appealed following the appeals procedure noted in this policy.

The eligibility criteria might **exclude** some groups of students from support. The Financial support team provide the latest information about who is eligible for support.

Some students defined as ineligible are:

- Under 16s (the college can arrange funding outside of ESFA funds where needed)
- Adult and Community students (on non-accredited short courses)
- Students participating in a waged apprenticeship (NB 16-19 year old apprentices can apply to Care To Learn for childcare assistance)
- Students undertaking a Higher Education programme, other support funds are available in college for these students.

CARE LEAVERS

In line with ESFA rules Apprentices cannot be supported through the 16-19 bursary. However care leavers on an apprenticeship are eligible to apply for the Care Leaver Bursary. This is for a single payment of up to £1,000 for the maximum of 3 years - [Apprenticeships care leavers' bursary guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeships-care-leavers-bursary-guidance). The Student Finance Team do not administer these payments or assess these applications. The Student Finance Team can signpost to support.

PAYMENTS

In line with ESFA rules all approved payments will be made in-kind wherever possible, rather than cash payments. Where this is not possible, payments will be made through BACS transfers directly into the student's nominated bank account. Bank accounts must be in the student's name. These payments will be made on specified dates as agreed in the financial support award email. Where payment in kind or bank transfer is not possible, the college may consider other methods of payment.

Students eligible for Free College Meals receive payments on to their college ID card for use within the college refectories and restaurant. Where possible the college will meet individual dietary requirement – where this is not possible other payment methods will be considered. Meal payments are for the names student's use only. If a student is concerned about another student's ability to access funds for food, they should refer them to the financial support department or confidentially inform a member of curriculum.

The Free College Meal (FCM) and meals award are for the individual. Students who are found to be 'lending' ID cards to other students not eligible for the support or using awards to obtain food and then selling it to other students could be seen as improper use of the funds and the funding may be withdrawn from the student. Improper use of meals allowances on non-timetabled days is monitored and could result in withdrawal of support.

AUDIT/GOVERNANCE

Administration and allocation of funds will be subject to the College's normal governance and audit processes. Audit guidance is available on the Department for Education website. The College will keep records as evidence as required by the ESFA, for audit purposes. Examples include:

- Copies of income evidence to assess entitlement
- Letters confirming a student's vulnerable status

- Invoices received from childcare providers for childcare costs

All applicants are asked to supply bank details for various payments. When an applicant's bank details have been recorded onto the college's MI system all paperwork/details are be destroyed.
The college complies The Data Protection Act 2018.

APPEALS

Students are advised, in writing, of the College's decision and of the reasons if they are not successful in their application. Students may appeal against any financial support decision to the Student Finance Manager in the first instance (emails to Finsupp@kirkleescollege.ac.uk). Formal appeals should be in writing to the Head of Student Experience (appeals@kirkleescollege.ac.uk) and should explain why the student feels their application has not been properly assessed or demonstrate that the Financial Support Policy has not been applied correctly. If this process does not resolve the problem to the student's satisfaction, then they are advised to use the college's formal Complaints Procedures.

Students may appeal against a decision using the college formal complaints procedure: [Compliments-and-Complaints-Policy-and-Procedure-March-2023.pdf \(kirkleescollege.ac.uk\)](#)

Complaints should detail: why the student feels their application has not been properly assessed or their hardship needs met or demonstrate that the Financial Support Policy has not been applied correctly.

Appeals should be in writing, along with supporting evidence, sent to the Head of Student Experience. Students will be informed of the decision within 10 working days. In some cases, students may be contacted or invited in prior to the meeting to discuss the content of their appeal.

RE-APPLICATION

If a students' circumstances change, they can request their application is reviewed at a later point in the year. Email: Finsupp@kirkleescollege.ac.uk with new information and evidence and this will be reviewed by the student bursary team.

16-19 EFA FUNDING

The 16-19 Bursary

The Government provides funding to tackle disadvantage both through the ESFA's funding formula and through support to help young people meet the costs of participating in education and training post 16. The policy is designed to help support the young people who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education or training.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund consists of two elements:

- i) Young people in or leaving care, in receipt of Income Support, and disabled young people in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance will be eligible to receive a bursary of **up to** £1,200 a year. The amount given is on an individual basis and assessed needs.
- ii) College uses discretion to make awards to other young people facing financial barriers to participation, such as the costs of transport, meals, books and equipment and other course related costs.

Receipt of the bursary may be dependent on students meeting agreed conditions set by the college e.g. satisfactory attendance and behaviour.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for a bursary the student must be aged 16 or over but also under 19 on 31st of August in the academic year in which they start their study programme. Students aged 18 at the start of the academic year will still receive support until the end of the academic year/course. Student's with an EHC plan are categorised as if they are under 19 (up to and including age 25).

Young people must satisfy the residency criteria set by the ESFA. They must also be undertaking a course that is funded by the ESFA, or a 16-19 traineeship programme to be eligible for financial support.

CATEGORY A - VYP BURSARY	CATEGORY B – DISCRETIONARY BURSARY	CATEGORY C - HARDSHIP BURSARY
Young people in care, leaving care, in receipt of universal credit or disabled young people in receipt of both Disability Living Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance.	Students with a household income below £30,000.	Students facing financial hardship which may become a barrier to continuing in full time education.
These students are entitled to claim a bursary of up to £1200 dependant on attendance and behaviour. Payment of the bursary will include e.g. travel costs, meal costs, and course related expenses. All support given is on an individual student needs basis.	These students are entitled to discretionary support e.g. meals costs, travel costs and course related expenses. This support may be conditional on attendance and meeting behaviour standards. The level of support may be dependent on remaining funds.	These students may be entitled to discretionary support such as travel costs, meal costs or course related expenses. The level of support is dependent on remaining funds.

Financial support payments are 'in kind' unless by exception.

Students can also apply for free college meals at the point of application.

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APPLICATION

Students requiring the VYP Bursary (Category A) may have to evidence their eligibility by submitting a letter of entitlement relating to benefits received or written confirmation of the student's current or previous Looked After status from the relevant Local Authority. The maximum that can be awarded for this bursary is £1200. If a student's status changes in year and they become a vulnerable student their payments may be adjusted to meet new financial needs and circumstances.

All applicants will be required to complete an online or paper Bursary Application Form. Application forms need to be accompanied by evidence of eligibility and bank account details in the students' name.

Evidence required includes **one** of the following :

- A P60 for the last financial year or 3 months of recent wage slips **Or** Universal credit /pension credit/ Income support / JSA / etc
- Tax credit award notice for this financial year
- Final tax credit award notice for previous financial year
- Other e.g. NAS (National Association of Asylum Seekers) support etc.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

Travel

- Travel support is provided through a monthly Metro Pass. Individual arrangements can be made if necessary, in extenuating circumstances. The threshold for qualifying for travel support is living 1 mile or more from college.
- If a student has their transport arranged through Kirklees Council transport team, College will pay their contribution invoice, usually issued in October.
- Cash contributions towards train fares may also be issued where appropriate.

Meals

- Funds for food is paid directly onto the student ID card. A sum of £4.00 is available daily, with any unspent amounts returned to the central bursary. Where possible the college will meet individual dietary requirement – where this is not possible other payment methods will be considered. If students are attending work placements and will not have access to college meals, payments will be made into bank accounts to cover these costs.
- Students can access a free breakfast (set breakfast) at all sites.
- Students are not expected to access meal support on non-timetabled days, however, in exceptional circumstances this can be reviewed by Student Experience and Safeguarding.

Stationery costs

- Funds for stationary are paid directly into the student's bank account. By exception the college can make alternative payment arrangements.
- For certain courses, a mandatory Kit and/or uniform is required; **these costs can be** met by the college. These items are gifted to the students. The student completes a link in the application process and are asked to note their clothes sizes/colour choice etc. The kits are ordered in college

and given to the students for use in classes. These kits belong to the students and do not need to be returned.

Trips, Events & Fees

- Where possible these payments are made direct to the organiser of the trips via internal departmental transfer. Departments will be reimbursed for the costs of those who qualify for the bursary. No cash payments will be paid to the student. By exception the college can make alternative payment arrangements.
- UCAS Fees associated with applying for Higher education will be paid into student bank accounts on production of proof of costs. Where a student does not have a bank account. By exception the college can make alternative payment arrangements.

Vulnerable Young Person (VYP) Payments (These payments include all other 16-18 types of support plus the below)

In line with ESFA rules all approved payments will be made in-kind where ever possible, as above, up to a maximum of £1,200 per academic year. Cash payments are made by exception. The following support is exclusively for VYP students issued in conjunction with the Care Team/Social or Support Workers, considering any student specific vulnerabilities. Support 'in kind' will be made for the following items:

- **Stationery cost** payments of £20 per term will be made into bank accounts on the following dates:

At point of application	8 January 2024	8 April 2024
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- **WIFI Support** (age 18 at point of application) for independent living students identified by the Student Experience Team. £20 paid into bank accounts on the monthly payment date listed within the finance policy
- **Totum Card** will be paid for through the bursary fund and ordered by the Student Enrichment Team. This is to enable to student to make savings outside of college.
- **Travel payments** – Students can claim the cost of all costs associated with any educational appointments. The 1 mile rule for transport is disregarded for VYP students, enabling attendance at appointments.
- **£250 Currys vouchers** to purchase a laptop or other course related electronic equipment
- **Equipment payments** for a college bag, waterproof coat, headphones can be made into bank accounts where necessary. By exception the college can make alternative payment arrangements.

19+ Discretionary Student Support Funds

The Adult Education Budget, is aimed at encouraging adults to participate and remain in education and training. The purpose of the funds is to remove financial obstacles to participation and retention in education. Financial support may cover items such as, the cost of travel to and from college and any childcare costs. Funding will be awarded to students studying on an ESFA funded course only. Applicants who fall into the exception categories are not eligible to apply for support.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for support the student must be aged 19 or over 19 on the 1st day of their course in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. The student must be studying on an ESFA funded course. This does not include community (non-vocational) courses.

If a student is aged over 19 and they may be required to pay their own tuition fees, or take out an Advanced Learner Loan. Further information regarding the loan can be found here: [Advanced Learner Loan: How to apply](#) . If the student is paying their own fees they are not eligible to apply for the discretionary financial

support. If the student takes out an Advanced Learner Loan they can apply for support and this will be taken from the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary.

The threshold for eligibility per household income is £30,000 for the previous tax year. The financial support team will consider applications where the household income exceeds £30,000 but evidence of hardship may be required. If a student's financial situation has changed substantially since the last tax year, they should seek advice from the Financial Support Team.

APPLICATION

All applicants will be required to complete an online or paper Bursary Application Form. Application forms need be accompanied by evidence of eligibility and bank account details.

Evidence required includes **one** of the following :

- A P60 for the last financial year or 3 months of recent wage slips **Or** Universal credit /pension credit/ Income support / JSA / etc
- Tax credit award notice for this financial year
- Final tax credit award notice for previous financial year
- Other e.g. NAS (National Association of Asylum Seekers) support etc.

The benefit letter must include the student's name and address and must be dated within 6 months of the application submission. If the student is part of a joint claim, they must still be named on the paperwork.

All applications must be complete and accompanied with the required evidence before they are accepted for processing. Upon submission of a completed online application and the necessary evidence, an email will be sent to the student outlining the timescales involved in processing the application, how we will notify them of an award, and the Student Finance Team contact details for further enquiries.

Types of support

In line with SFA rules approved payments will be made in-kind where ever possible;

Travel

- Payments will be made into student's bank account and will be the equivalent of the most economical means of travel: daily/weekly bus ticket.

Meals

- Funds for food is paid directly onto the student card, a sum of £4.00 is available daily, with any balances being cleared at the end of the college day. Where possible the college will meet individual dietary requirement – where this is not possible other payment methods will be considered. If students are attending work placements and will not have access to college meals, payments will be made into bank accounts to cover these costs.
- Students can access a **free breakfast** (set breakfast) at all sites.

Stationery costs

- Funds for stationary are paid directly into the student's bank account. By exception the college can make alternative payment arrangements.
- For certain courses, a mandatory **Kit** and/or uniform is required; **these costs can be** met by the college. These items are gifted to the students. The student completes a link in the application process and are asked to note their clothes sizes/colour choice etc. The kits are ordered in college and given to the students for use in classes. These kits belong to the students and do not need to be returned.

Trips, Events & Fees

- Where possible these payments are made direct to the organiser of the trips via internal departmental transfer. Departments will be reimbursed for the costs of those who qualify for the bursary. No cash payments will be paid to the student. By exception the college can make alternative payment arrangements.
- UCAS Fees associated with applying for Higher education will be paid into student bank accounts on production of proof of costs. Where a student does not have a bank account. By exception the college can make alternative payment arrangements.

Child care

- Some students with young children will be entitled to claim for costs of childcare; these are submitted on an individual basis and are paid directly to the OFSTED registered childcare provider.

Any money payments are generally made into a student's bank account only, this ensures monies go to the student in line with Government policy.

CHILDCARE SUPPORT

Support with childcare expenses for students aged below 20 years of age can be claimed from a government scheme – Care 2 Learn. Please see the following link for further information: [Care to Learn](#)

The college receives funding to enable supporting eligible students with the cost of childcare, these can include nursery, child-minder fees or out of school clubs. Any childcare provider must be Ofsted registered; copies of their Registration documents are required to accompany the Childcare Application form (CAF). The student must be undertaking an ESFA funded course. Financial support is not available to students undertaking an Adult Education course or an ESOL course.

Students studying on a Higher Education qualification can be supported to apply for financial support through Student Finance England. The college does not administer this fund.

Support is aimed at students who are parents or those who have 'parental responsibility'. This includes children who are fostered, adopted or have a court order placing them with a person other than their parent. The student is required to find their own childcare provider. The following link will enable students to search for Ofsted registered providers within Kirklees: [Childcare Options](#)

Students from outside the Kirklees area should be able to access the same information from their Local Authority.

Support will be offered to cover the students timetabled hours only. If the class times overlap the childcare provider's provisions session times, such as the lunch period, support may be awarded for the full day. This may be negotiated with the provider. Any changes to timetabled hours should be notified to the financial support team as soon as possible to ensure support is available for the change.

In order to ensure that the process is fair, the following criteria will be used to help prioritise applications:-

- Students who are continuing/progressing their study
- Students who are full time
- Students with most financial need, as evidenced by household income

Returning students will be given priority for support if they submit an early application, by 31st July. Any new students applying for this support should submit an application by 31st August. Any applications after this date will be reviewed on a first come first served basis.

Free Government Childcare Funding Schemes

When support is assessed any government schemes offering free childcare will be taken into consideration. For further information on the schemes available please see the following link: [Free Childcare Funding](#)

PAYMENT

Childcare fees will be paid up to a maximum of £7200 per year per child. The college will pay a fair market rate for childcare provision and reserves the right to negotiate for rates which provide the maximum benefit for students.

Providers are requested to submit an invoice on a 4-weekly basis, in advance, using the Kirklees College Childcare Provider template, to the financial support team. The college will make payment by BACS upon receipt of a complete invoice, signed by both the provider and the student. The invoice includes a section for completion by the provider regarding the child's attendance at the provision, requesting any absences and absence reasons to be noted. If a student's support is under review due to unsatisfactory attendance, the child's attendance information may be used to substantiate any withdrawal of support.

The college will not pay any deposits, registrations or retainer fees. If the provision requires this to secure a place, the student is liable for this fee. No payment will be made to providers for college holidays and statutory bank holidays, i.e. Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year Holiday etc.

The college cannot be held responsible or liable for any accidents or incidents whilst the child is attending any registered childcare provision.

The Financial Support Team reserves the right to withdraw a student's childcare support due to improper use of the facility and unsatisfactory attendance or behaviour at college. Where childcare provision is withdrawn, the college will honour one month's notice to the childcare provider. Please see **Eligibility and Withdrawal of Financial Support** for further information.

SAFEGUARDING – EMERGENCY PAYMENTS

If a student is at risk of harm, the college will, wherever possible support the funding of emergency accommodation or transport, food, clothing and other resources need to ensure the safety of the person.

HARDSHIP FUNDING

The college liaises with Local Authority as appropriate to proactively request hardship funding. This money is distributed by the student finance team to the students eligible via BACS payment or vouchers.

There will be regular scrutiny of the access to financial support and the Financial Support Policy will be regularly reviewed – at least annually.

Key sources of Information and Guidance

16 to 19 Financial Support

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year#funding-and-allocations-bursary-for-vulnerable-groups>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6241b9cfe90e075f0c9bd1ba/16-](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6241b9cfe90e075f0c9bd1ba/16-19_Bursary_Checklist_1_.pdf)

[19 Bursary Checklist 1 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6241b9cfe90e075f0c9bd1ba/16-19_Bursary_Checklist_1_.pdf)

Free Meals in FE

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year#free-meals-key-points>

Care to Learn

[Help paying for childcare: Help with childcare while you study - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/help-paying-for-childcare)

<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

19+ Financial Support

[Adult Education Budget - West Yorkshire Combined Authority \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/adult-education-budget)

Advanced Learner Loans

Course Fees

<https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan>

[Advanced learner loans funding rules: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan)

Advanced Learner Loans – Bursary Fund

<https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan/bursary-fund>

<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

Note – Guidance can change in year and the College reserves the right to amend / cease support detailed in this policy due to changes in the funding rules or changes or requirements from the ESFA and any other funding provider.