

16-19 Student Finance Policy 2026/2027

Scope

This policy applies to students aged 16 and over but under 19 on 31st August 2026, studying towards Department for Education (DfE) funded further education qualifications, that also qualify for bursary support based on funding body criteria.

Policy context

Vision West Nottinghamshire College policy is to follow the policy guidelines of the DfE and openly, fairly and transparently apply the rules set by Government.

The funds available from the 16-19 Bursary Fund, are managed by the College and are allocated on a first come, first served basis (with the exception of the 16-18 Vulnerable Student Bursary Fund), via an application and assessment process. Students must meet the specified eligibility criteria to be considered for any assistance. The rules within this policy are set out at the time of writing and could be subject to change at any time from the DfE.

Financial support is intended to remove barriers and support participation, attendance and achievement.

Applications received by the Student Finance Team will be processed within eight weeks of receipt of a fully completed application. Applicants will be notified of their application outcome by email.

Eligibility for 16 – 19 bursaries

To be eligible for the bursary students must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026
- meet the residency criteria in DfE funding regulations for post-16 provision in the 2026 to 2027 academic year
- be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be either;

- funded directly by the DfE or by the DfE via a devolved local authority
- otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the DfE list of qualifications approved for funding
- a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

Non-employed students aged 16 to 19 who are participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme are eligible to receive the bursary in the same way as any other student participating in an eligible, publicly funded course.

Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are employed, rather than in education, **are not** eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund or Free Meals.

Students on distance learning provision are not normally eligible for support other than travel costs to exams.

****T Level Students Only****

In recognition of the requirement for T Level students to attend both college and mandatory industry placements, the College may provide support to help facilitate attendance

Transport support may available for students enrolled on T Level programmes with a household income of £55,000 or under.

Students who experience financial hardship in travelling to their placement may be eligible for additional support through a discretionary payment, subject to assessment.

Overview of funding available; 16-19 Student Support Fund for full-time students

<u>Funding</u>	Household Income below £50,000
<u>Overview</u>	
Help available:	• West Notts College Travel Pass for eligible learners based on distance and income threshold above. • Discretionary Bursary based on individual application identifying hardship and barriers preventing a learner fully engaging with their programme. • Help with public transport costs if bus travel isn't available • Support for compulsory kit/uniform and other essential curriculum resources • A total of £250 towards curriculum-based trips throughout the academic year with trips under £50 fully funded • 50% towards UK University interview travel costs

	• UCAS fee • Exams – Pay 100% of exam <u>resit</u> cost. • <u>Other essential items</u>
<u>Funding Overview</u>	T Level Student with a household Income between £50,000 and £55,000
Help available:	• West Notts College Travel Pass for eligible learners

<u>Funding Overview</u>	Household Income between £50,000 and £150,00
Help available	• College travel pass at a 50% reduced rate of £330.00.

For students with a household income above £150,000, the travel pass is available at the full cost of £660.00

In all cases proof of household income must be received before any award is given.

To qualify for the full bursary support you must have an annual gross household income of below £50,000.

In extenuating circumstances discretion may be given to award elements of the bursary in households exceeding this threshold. An application will need to be submitted with proof of the household income and details of the extenuating circumstances, this will then be individually assessed by the Head of Welfare, Intervention and Wellbeing.

For all applications (excluding Free College Meals) funding is limited; therefore, evidence of eligibility does not guarantee an award. Student's wishing to apply for financial support should do so as soon as possible, applications can be made from the beginning of June but will not be activated until enrolment has been confirmed. Awards will be made on a first come first served basis. Where funds are scarce, partial awards (West Notts College Travel Card) may be considered to ensure that the maximum number of students can benefit from the bursary.

Bursary details

- Discretionary Bursary based on individual application identifying hardship and barriers preventing a learner from fully engaging with their programme. The student support team will look at what support can be made available, such as support for meals where free meals are not being provided, additional trip costs for learning related trips, specialist equipment needed to undertake study, etc.
- West Notts College Travel Pass awarded if you live over 2km from your college site.

If you live within a walking distance of 2km (1.24 miles) or less from the college, you will still be able to purchase a West Notts College Travel Pass but will pay the approximate price of £660 per year.

- 100% support for compulsory kit/uniform (as specified by the Curriculum Area) – internal transfer or reimbursement with receipts. Students who qualify for the bursary can have items purchased/reimbursed for them however, the items will remain the property of the college and they will be expected to return them at the end of the academic year or at any point should they withdraw. Kits/uniforms can be retained for further use to enable them to complete their studies if they are progressing onto the next level.

Kit/uniform will not be purchased on the student's behalf until the start of the academic year

- 50% paid towards curriculum-based trips to a maximum funding of £250 per year. (These must be linked to the learners learning)
 - 100% towards curriculum-based trips costing under £50
 - 50% towards curriculum-based trips costing over £50 (provided the total including any previous trip cost award does not exceed £250)
- UK University interview travel costs – 50% of the total travel costs reimbursement with receipts and letter confirming interview date, time and venue. Public transport costs only.
- UCAS – Pay 100% of the application fee.
- Exams – Pay 100% of exam resit cost for students in receipt of a bursary.
- 100% support with public transport costs for those in receipt of a bursary, but do not live on a route covered by the West Notts College Travel Pass. Student must live more than 2km away from the furthest college base they attend. If a travel card is available to reduce the cost of travel a student will be expected to purchase/apply for this. Travel cards available;
 - 16-17 Saver Railcard <https://www.thetrainline.com/trains/great-britain/railcards/16-17-saver>

- 16-25 Railcard <https://www.thetrainline.com/trains/great-britain/railcards/16-25-railcard>

Overview of funding available; 16-19 Vulnerable Student Bursary

<u>Funding Overview</u>	16-19 Vulnerable Student Bursary Fund
Help available:	Up to £1200, which will be a combination of the following; • A student welcome pack • Course related book voucher • West Notts College Travel Pass • Help with public transport costs if bus travel isn't available • Support for compulsory kit/uniform • A total of £250 towards curriculum-based trips throughout the academic year • 50% towards UK University interview travel costs • UCAS fee • Other essential items. • Exams – Pay 100% of exam <u>resit</u> cost

Students who meet one of the 4 criteria below and who have a financial need can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are;

- in care
- care leavers
- Be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31st August 2026
- receiving Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) **in their own right as well as** Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own right

Please note that eligibility is not a guarantee of the full £1200 award from the vulnerable bursary fund. There is the possibility of a limited award or even no award at all if there is no financial need and/or the financial needs are covered from other sources. For example

- attending specialist residential provision that covers their educational costs in full
- taking a distance learning programme who has no financial barriers to participation (for example, they don't have any travel costs or meal costs)
- in the care of the local authority whose educational costs are covered in full by the local authority
- who is financially supported by their partner

The amount of any bursary award will be based on need, and will be assessed individually and awarded the following;

- **A student welcome pack** – This includes items such as stationary, etc.
- **West Notts College Travel Pass** awarded if you live over 2km from your college site.
 - West Notts College Travel Pass awarded if you live over 2km from your college site and are timetabled for two days or more.

If you live within a walking distance of 2km (1.24 miles) or less from the college, you will still be able to purchase a West Notts College Travel Pass but will pay the standard price of approximately £660 Year per

- **100% support for compulsory kit/uniform** (as specified by the Curriculum Area) – internal transfer or reimbursement with receipts. Students who qualify for the bursary can have items purchased/reimbursed for them however, the items will remain the property of the college and they will be expected to return them at the end of the academic year or at any point should they withdraw. Kits/uniforms can be retained for further use to enable them to complete their studies if they are progressing onto the next level.

Kit/uniform will not be purchased on the student's behalf until the start of the academic year

- **50% paid towards curriculum-based trips** to a maximum funding of £250 per year.
 - 100% towards curriculum-based trips costing under £50
 - 50% towards curriculum-based trips costing over £50 (provided the total including any previous award does not exceed £250)
- **UK University interview travel costs** – 50% of the total travel costs reimbursement with receipts and letter confirming interview date, time and venue. Public transport costs only.
- **UCAS** – 100% of the application fee.

- **Exams** – Pay 100% of exam resit cost for students in receipt of a bursary.
- **If you do not live a route covered by the West Notts College Travel Pass** then 100% support with public transport costs for those in receipt of a bursary. Student must live more than 2km away from the furthest college base they attend. If a travel card is available to reduce the cost of travel a student will be expected to purchase/apply for this. . Travel cards available;
 - 16-17 Saver Railcard <https://www.thetrainline.com/trains/great-britain/railcards/16-17-saver>
 - 16-25 Railcard <https://www.thetrainline.com/trains/great-britain/railcards/16-25-railcard>
- If a student has any further costs associated with their college course not covered by the support outlined above, they must contact the Student Finance Team.

If you require Childcare

You can get Care to Learn if all the following apply to you:

- **you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course**
- **you're the main carer for your child**
- **you live in England**
- **you're either a British citizen or have a legal right to live and study in England**
- **your course qualifies**
- **your childcare provider qualifies**
 - **Up to £180.00 per week per child in Ofsted registered childcare. Funding available for a maximum of two children aged 5 or under on 31 August 2026. This is only to be used for timetabled days in college plus 30 minutes travelling time before and after timetabled hours.**
- **If the child is eligible for 15 or 30 hours per week free early education, these must be used to cover your required sessions; you may then apply for additional cover, if required.**
- **If the student has a partner who they are living with, who does not work, it will be expected that this partner will care for the child(ren). Any award will be based on individual circumstances.**
- **Support with childcare costs for part-time students will be case assessed at our discretion and may be awarded based on individual circumstances and specific need**

Free College Meals

<u>Funding Overview</u>	Free College Meals
Help available:	£4.20 per day for timetabled days at college (£2.66 uplifted to £4.20)

Eligible benefits

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. Free meals in further education defines disadvantage as students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, have made a successful application to Vision West Nottinghamshire College location will be made to students aged between 16 and 19 on 31st August 2026 who are or whose parent/carer are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

- Students aged 19 or over are only eligible for a free meal if they or their parent/carer are in receipt of a qualifying benefit and they:
 - Are continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or
 - Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- The allocation will be £4.20 (£2.66 uplifted to £4.20) per timetabled day at college, this will be credited weekly on to the student's college lanyard and allow them to make food purchases in any of the college diners.
- Eligible students attending placement will receive payment of £4.20 (£2.66 uplifted to £4.20) per day paid into their nominated bank account on production of a copy of their signed placement log to the student finance team.

Exceptional Hardship Award

For students who find themselves in exceptional financial barriers a standalone hardship application can be submitted by a member of the support staff up to a total of £250 in any one year

Ineligible Expenditure for Bursary

Specialist tuition provided by external organisations
Courses that are externally delivered and certified
Support with accommodation / living costs
Using bursary for operational costs (other than bursary admin)

Appeals/Complaints procedure

Any disagreement with a decision made by the Student Finance Team in relation to an application should be made in writing to the Head of Welfare, intervention and well-being, Vision West Nottinghamshire College, Derby Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 5BH.

Student Finance Team contact details

Student Finance Team
Vision West Nottinghamshire College
Derby Road
Mansfield
Nottinghamshire
NG18 5BH
Telephone: 01623 900455
Email: studentfinance@wnc.ac.uk