

16-19 Student Finance Policy 2025/2026

Scope

This policy applies to students aged 16 and over but under 19 on 31st August 2025, 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 2025
- meet the residency criteria in DfE funding regulations for post-16 provision in the 2025 to 2026 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.

Students aged 19 and over on 31 August 2025 in the 2025 to 2026 academic year

Students who are aged 19 and over on 31 August 2025 are not eligible for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund unless they:

- are a student who is continuing on an eligible study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers)
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are attending eligible education provision

No students aged 19 or over are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary.

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

<u>Funding</u>	Household Income below £40,000
<u>Overview</u>	
Help available:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Notts College Travel Pass for eligible learners based on distance and income threshold above. • Discretionary Bursary payment 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 • 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.

To qualify for the bursary support you must have an annual gross household income of below £40,000. 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 payment 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 standard price of £53.00 per month (irrespective of whether you qualify for a bursary). However, if there are legitimate reasons preventing you from walking to college, you may be eligible to pay the subsidised of £29 per month. If you study at two campuses and one is more than 2km (1.24 miles) walking distance from your home, you will get your travel pass as part of your bursary.

- 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.

All above payments will be awarded based on 90% attendance rate except exam resit support which will have no attendance threshold. The award you receive will be based upon you attending all your

planned classes, behaviour and discipline will also be considered. Your attendance will be monitored by the online college register system.

- 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. If the travel card incurs a cost this can be reimbursed as part of the bursary funding when a receipt is submitted. 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>

Full monthly payment in relation to transport costs is made if attendance is 90% or above. If attendance falls below 70% no payment is made. Attendance between 70% and 90% the student will receive that percentage of payment.

Overview of funding available; 16-19 Vulnerable Student Bursary

Funding Overview	16-19 Vulnerable Student Bursary Fund
Help available:	<p>Up to £1200, which will be a combination of the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student welcome pack • Course related book voucher • Weekly BACS payment if assessment and attendance meets requirements <p>The maximum £1,200 will be paid where a learner is on a programme of 30 weeks or more studying more than 480 hrs. The sum will be pro rata where the hours / weeks are lower.</p> <p>Students in receipt of the Vulnerable Student Bursary are eligible to receive the following in addition to the above (funded through the discretionary 16-18 Student Support Fund);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Notts College Travel Pass

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Exams – Pay 100% of exam <u>resit</u> cost
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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
- 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, laptop, 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 standard price of £53 per month (irrespective of whether you qualify for a bursary). However, if there are legitimate reasons preventing you from walking to college, you may be eligible to pay the subsidised price of £29 per month. If you study at two campuses and one is more than 2km (1.24 miles) walking distance from your home, you will get your travel pass as part of your bursary.*
- **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. If the travel card incurs a cost this can be reimbursed as part of the bursary funding when a receipt is submitted. 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>

Full monthly payment in relation to transport costs is made if attendance is 90% or above. If attendance falls below 70% no payment is made. Attendance between 70% and 90% the student will receive that percentage of payment.

- 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.
- **Weekly BACS payment** to the students bank account.
 - Students' income under £3,000 = **(£27 per week)**
 - Students' income between £4,000 and £3,001 = **(£25 per week)**
 - Students' income between £5,000 and £4,001 = **(£22 per week)**
 - Students' income between £5,000 and £9,999 = **(£20 per week)**

Weekly payments will only be made to cover college based costs, students will be expected to indicate what the payment is needed for.

If the Students income is over £10,000 then **NO BACS payments** will be awarded, but all the other elements of the bursary will still be awarded. Payment dates are published and available to all students and can be found at the end of this document.

Weekly payments are only made if the attendance is 90% or above for the week in question.

The award you receive will be based upon you attending all your planned classes, behaviour and discipline will also be considered. Your attendance will be monitored by the online college register system.

If you require Childcare

You can get Care to Learn if all of 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

Free College Meals

Funding Overview	Free College Meals
Help available:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £4.20 per day for timetabled days at college

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 Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

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.

- Allocations will be made to students aged between 16 and 19 on 31st August 2025 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 on 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 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 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 are 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

Vulnerable Student Bursary - weekly pay dates			
Week number	Monday wc date	Weekly Pay Dates - Monday	
1	01/09/2025	08/09/2025	
2	08/09/2025	15/09/2025	
3	15/09/2025	22/09/2025	
4	22/09/2025	29/09/2025	
5	29/09/2025	06/10/2025	
6	06/10/2025	13/10/2025	
7	13/10/2025	20/10/2025	
8	20/10/2025	27/10/2025	
	27/10/2025		October Half Term
9	03/11/2025	10/11/2025	
10	10/11/2025	17/11/2025	
11	17/11/2025	24/11/2025	
12	24/11/2025	01/12/2025	
13	01/12/2025	08/12/2025	
14	08/12/2025	15/12/2025	
15	15/12/2025	22/12/2025	
	22/12/2025		25/12 + 26/12 BH
	29/12/2025		Xmas holidays
16	05/01/2026	12/01/2026	
17	12/01/2026	19/01/2026	
18	19/01/2026	26/01/2026	
19	26/01/2026	02/02/2026	
20	02/02/2026	09/02/2026	

21	09/02/2026	16/02/2026	
	16/02/2026		February Half Term
22	23/02/2026	02/03/2026	
23	02/03/2026	09/03/2026	
24	09/03/2026	16/03/2026	
25	16/03/2026	23/03/2026	
26	23/03/2026	30/03/2026	
	30/03/2026		Good Friday-BH 03/04
	06/04/2026		06/04 -Easter Mon
27	13/04/2026	20/04/2026	
28	20/04/2026	27/04/2026	
29	27/04/2026	04/05/2026	
30	04/05/2026	11/05/2026	May Day BH - 04/05
31	11/05/2026	18/05/2026	
32	18/05/2026	25/05/2026	
	25/05/2026		May Half term BH 26/05
33	01/06/2026	08/06/2026	
34	08/06/2026	15/06/2026	
35	15/06/2026	22/06/2026	
36	22/06/2026	29/06/2026	

2025/2026