

Policy/Procedure/Guideline Review

Policy/Procedure/Guideline:	Financial Support and Bursary Policy 2026 – 2027
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Changes Made:	Version 1 – for internal consultation Updated date references throughout Rates reviewed throughout and Free Meal value uplifted to £4.00. Other rates of reimbursement uplifted by c3.5% unless capped by funding guidance. Removal of general free meal offer protection for learners enrolling on a 2-year programme in 2025/26 following removal of general free meal offer to 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Learners (paras 7.1 and 7.3) in 2025/26 Updating of Free Meals section to reflect DfE policy changes: - Universal Credit: Now automatically qualifies all eligible students - Transitional protection: Removed - Eligibility checks: Now required annually Uplifted subsidised bus pass rates in table in appendix 1 by 5%, aligned to cost increase to the College

Bursary Policy 2026/27

1. Introduction

- 1.1 East Lancashire Learning Group, which consists of Nelson and Colne College, Lancashire Adult Learning and Accrington and Rossendale College (The College) receives allocations of funds annually from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Office for Students (OfS) to provide financial support to our students.
- 1.2 The College refers to these funds as bursary funds and administers and distributes them to provide financial support in order to help students overcome financial barriers to learning, ensuring they can take part in or continue learning and access educational and progression opportunities. The College recognises the positive impact of education on the lives of our students and promotes the full participation in course related activities and College enrichment/extra-curricular programs.
- 1.3 Any student may apply for financial assistance and should be aware that their application will receive consideration in accordance with the eligibility requirements stated in Section 6 and 7.
- 1.4 The College provides information about financial support and promotes access to support via information leaflets, posters, the College websites, at interviews and at promotional events i.e. open evenings and school liaison events, including targeted promotions to students who received Free School Meals at school.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure:
 - bursary funds are distributed in accordance with the regulations and guidelines laid out by funding agencies;
 - the administration of the bursary funds helps students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education;
 - the eligibility criteria for bursary funds is explained;
 - systems are in place to administer, record and monitor bursary funds, to ensure funds are used for their intended purpose.

3. Legislative/Quality Framework

- 3.1 The College will apply the following published guidelines for the appropriate age groups and funding types, for the use of these funds:
 - Free meals in further education funded institutions: guide for the 2026 to 2027 academic year
 - 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027 academic year
 - DfE Adult Skills Fund (ASF): Funding and Performance Management Rules 2026 to 2027
 - LCCA Adult Skills Fund Funding Rules For the 2026 to 2027 funding year
 - Advanced Learner Loans Funding and Performance Management Rules 2026 to 2027
 - Care to Learn academic year 2026 to 2027: conditions of grant funding
 - HE Access & Participation Plan 2025-2028
 - Apprenticeships care leavers' bursary guidance

- 3.2 Please note that as the above funding guidelines are updated, this policy will be amended to reflect changes as required

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all eligible (see Section 6 and 7) students of East Lancashire Learning Group.

5. Abbreviations

ATL	Adult Tailored Learning
ASF	Adult Skills Fund
ALL	Advanced Learner Loans Bursary
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DfE	Department for Education
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
EHCP	Education and Health Care Plan
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
FCM	Free College Meals
HE	Higher Education
IS	Income Support
LCCA	Lancashire Combined County Authority
OfS	Office for Students
PIP	Personal Independence Payment
UC	Universal Credit
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
VBF	Vulnerable Bursary Fund

6. Bursary Funding Eligibility Criteria

- 6.1 This policy covers the financial support funds which are available to eligible students. Students who apply for any of the funds will be assessed individually and awarded support based on their financial need. Please note:
- Bursaries are subject to available funds and eligibility does not guarantee entitlement to funds.
 - 16-19 Bursary payments are subject to a minimum attendance in College of 80% (There may be exceptional circumstances where this attendance level cannot be achieved, the college reserves the right to continue to support the learner following investigations with the tutor and student).
 - Behaviour must meet the College's code of conduct in line with College Policies and Procedures.
 - Bursary awards only cover one academic year and students must re-apply for support on an annual basis.

- 6.2 To be eligible for funding from any of the Bursary Funds, all students must satisfy the following criteria. Additional specific eligibility requirements apply to each fund as listed within the Bursary Funds Section (7) below:
- Residency criteria as set out by the [DfE funding regulations](#).
 - Have a gross annual household income of less than **£37,500** per year for bursary and childcare support – excluding Care to Learn. The College may choose to use its discretion where household income exceeds this amount but it is identified that support is needed.
 - Able to demonstrate 'relative financial need' for costs that may deter them from joining, continuing or completing their course.
 - Minimum attendance of 80% (exceptional circumstances may be considered).
- 6.3 Students must also be on a course that is subject to inspection by a public body (e.g. Ofsted) and must also be:
- Funded directly by the DfE or by Local Authority devolved funding (where the college holds a contract).
 - 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 14 to 19
 - On a 16-19 traineeship programme
 - Non-employed students aged 16 to 19 participating in a King's Trust Team Programme.
 - Regulated by the Office for Students (OfS) on a higher education programme
- 6.4 The College reserves the right to apply discretion to ensure that individual students' needs and personal circumstances are considered when decisions are made, in line with funding body guidance.
- 6.5 The following students are not eligible to receive any financial assistance from the DfE, LCCA or HE Financial Support Funds:
- An individual on an apprenticeship programme, or any waged training as they are employed, rather than in education (excluding care leavers) *unless they are eligible for the Apprenticeship Bursary for Care Leavers (para 7.5)*, or;
 - Receiving help with travel/childcare costs through Job Centre Plus or Work Programme provider;
 - Not eligible for funding (as determined by funding body rules);
 - Self-funded or employer funded.
- 6.6 Students not eligible for support via the specified funding bodies can, where there is an exceptional need, apply for support from the College's own Student Benefit Fund. Support may be provided dependent on financial need and subject to available funds.

7. Types of Bursary Funds

The bursary fund types, and additional eligibility criteria are detailed below.

7.1 DfE 16-19 Bursary Fund

Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- Aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31st August 2026, or;
- Aged 19 or over and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuer), or;
- Aged 19 or over with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Course Eligibility criteria (See Section 6.3).

Support Available:

- Discretionary bursaries to meet individual needs e.g., help with the cost of travel (excluding Taxis), books, equipment, specialist clothing, replacement of first lost ID badge, emergency meals -support, access to the free fruit and breakfast offer, support for costs relating to participating in work placement, trips & visits that are a compulsory part of the student's curriculum (not extra-curricular), UCAS, attending university interviews and open days.

Young people with caring responsibilities experience a range of difficulties and disadvantages which can potentially affect full-time study. Identified young carers will meet with the Safeguarding Officer to determine any financial need and additional awards may be supported for travel, trips that are a compulsory part of the curriculum and other course related costs in consultation with the Safeguarding, Prevent & Wellbeing Manager and Careers and Learner Services Manager or the Head of Finance. Awards must be in line with the DfE guidance.

Students who are entitled to DfE 16-19 Free Meals (para. 7.3), will not have an automatic entitlement to the wider DfE 16-19 Bursary Fund support offer. To access this, the criteria outlined in para. 6.2 must be met. Those students, whose household income exceeds the specified threshold, will be entitled to the Free Meals offer and the free fruit and breakfast offer only through the DfE 16-19 Bursary, other than in exceptional circumstances.

7.2 DfE 16-19 Bursary for Vulnerable Groups

Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- Aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2026; and
- In care; or
- Care leavers; or
- receiving Income Support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves and / or financially supporting someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner; or;
- 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.

Definition of 'In Care' and 'Care Leaver':

- 'In care' is defined as 'Children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.'
- A 'care leaver' is defined as:
 - a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or
 - a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16.

Support Available:

- Up to £1,200 per year (for courses that last for 30 weeks or more. Pro rata amounts payable for courses less than 30 weeks); based on an assessment of their actual needs.

In exceptional circumstances and where it is assessed that the student may need extra help to remain in education, further bursary funding can be allocated from the DfE 16-19 Bursary Fund. This will be at the discretion of the Safeguarding, Prevent and Wellbeing Manager and either the Head of Finance or the Careers and Learner Services Manager.

The amount of Bursary received will be determined on a case-by-case basis and the grant award will be based on the individual's actual financial needs as well as good attendance, punctuality, behaviour and progress.

Students will meet with the Safeguarding and Prevent team to determine how the Bursary will be distributed (e.g. via equipment awards, travel passes, weekly awards). Details of the award will be recorded at the meeting.

Please note applications for this bursary are assessed on an individual basis and there is a possibility of no award or a limited award if financial needs are covered from other sources.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are eligible for a bursary for Vulnerable groups ('in care' group), where they have a financial need. When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, the College will consider their immigration status and if the asylum claim is decided in their favour, they continue to be eligible for a bursary as a student from a vulnerable group until they reach the upper age limit.

Where an asylum claim is not supported, the individual may not be able to stay legally in the UK. When asylum claims have been fully heard/the appeals process exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds (with a few exceptions where the withdrawal of support would be seen as a breach of human rights).

Foster Care

A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is registered with an independent fostering agency, is classed as 'looked after'. These students meet the criteria for the 'in care' vulnerable group where they need financial support to participate.

A child who is privately fostered (a private arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

In some instances, a young person may have been in the care of the local authority and the care transferred to another party via a permanent form of fostering such as Special Guardianship Order. In these circumstances, the young person is defined as having left care so is now a 'care leaver'. They must meet the definition of a 'care leaver' in full (so the period of weeks and age range set out above) to be eligible for support from the bursary for the vulnerable groups, where they need financial support to participate.

7.3 DfE 16 – 19 Free Meals

Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- Aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31st August 2026, or;
- Aged 19 or over and continuing on the same study programme they began aged 16 – 18 (19+ continuer), or;
- Aged 19 or over with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Student or parents being in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

Benefit	Benefit Evidence required:	Additional Information/ Requirement
Income Support	Letter dated within 6 months of bursary application	
Income-based Jobseekers Allowance	Letter dated within 6 months of bursary application	
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	Letter dated within 6 months of bursary application	
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	Letter dated within 6 months of bursary application	

Benefit	Benefit Evidence required:	Additional Information/ Requirement
Guarantee element of State Pension Credit	Letter dated within 6 months of bursary Application	
Child Tax Credit	Award Letter dated within 12 months of bursary application (letters issued April or September)	NOT entitled to Working Tax Credit AND have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC
Working Tax Credit run-on	Award Letter dated within 12 months of bursary application (letters issued April or September)	Paid for 4 weeks after cessation
Universal Credit (UC)	3 most recent UC award notices	With net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per annum (after tax and not including any benefits)

Please note: Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for Free Meals Support

Available:

- Free meal to the value of £4.00 for each day the student attends study or activity that is part of their course. Meals will be supplied through the College catering outlets.
- Arrangements to ensure eligible students receive a free meal when studying or participating in activity off site will be put in place as required (e.g. work placements, trips/visits).

The College may award emergency meal support to those who are not eligible through DfE Free College Meals on a discretionary basis if there is a financial need.

The College will monitor and target eligible students by using the Department for Education's (DfE) electronic Eligibility Checking System to check FSM eligibility. Completion of a Pay My Student (PMS) application will be required.

Free College meal eligible students attending work placements as part of their course will be supported throughout their placement, via the employer or by a gift voucher issued by the College for use at a local supermarket. Payments for meal support will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

All students must have their eligibility assessed at the start of each academic year. The College will undertake checks prior to or at enrolment and will recheck eligibility annually in line with DfE requirements.

All eligible learners for FCM must make an application via Pay My Student and provide current supporting evidence at enrolment for each academic year prior to Free College Meals being allocated.

7.4 Care to Learn Scheme (Childcare)

Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- Students aged under 20 on the first day of the course can apply for support with childcare costs through the Care to Learn scheme.
- Young parent must be the main carer and in receipt of child benefit for the child(ren)

Support Available:

- Up to £180 per child per week

Details of the scheme and how to apply are available at [Care to Learn academic year 2026 to 2027: conditions of grant funding - GOV.UK](#)

Where actual childcare costs incurred by students exceed the rate available through Care to Learn Scheme, the College, at its discretion, may be able to reimburse this through the 16-19 Bursary.

7.5 Apprenticeship Bursary for Care Leavers

Care Leavers starting an apprenticeship on or after 1st August 2023 are eligible to receive a £3,000 bursary award, to be paid in instalments throughout the first year of their apprenticeship if they have been in the care of the local authority (in care) defined as:

- An eligible child – a young person who is 16 or 17 and who has been looked after by the local authority/health and social care trust for at least a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14, and who is still looked after
- A relevant child – a young person who is 16 or 17 who has left care after their 16th birthday and before leaving care was an eligible child
- A former relevant child – a young person who is aged between 19 and 21 (up to their 25th birthday if they are in education or training) who, before turning 18, was either an eligible or relevant child.

Evidence of the above must be provided and retained to support an application; this must be a signed email or letter confirmation from a local authority appointed Personal Advisor confirming that the apprentice is a care leaver.

The apprentice (aged under 25 at the time they started their apprenticeship) must give consent for their employer to be informed that they have been in the care of the local authority and understand that this declaration will be used to generate additional payments for both the Employer and the Training Provider (College) to support transition into work.

If the apprentice is found to have accepted payment incorrectly or when not eligible then the bursary will have to be repaid to the Government. The apprentice must sign to confirm they have received the bursary payment.

7.6 DfE/LCCA Adult Skills Fund Learner Support Fund

Additional Eligibility Criteria:

Hardship funding

- Aged 19 or over on the first day of the course

Support Available:

- Course-related costs, including trips, books and equipment (where these costs are not included in the tuition fee or full funding rate)
- Support with domestic emergencies and emergency accommodation provided by others, or by providing items or services or cash direct to the learner, this can be in the form of a grant or repayable loan
- Transport costs – refundable with receipts for public transport (exc. Taxi fares other than under exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement with the College) or mileage where you are the driver of the vehicle
- Examination fees
- Accreditation fees, professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies
- Registration fees

In exceptional circumstances, assistance may be awarded for course fees for students who need financial support to start or stay in learning where the learner is not eligible to fee remission for the reasons listed by the DfE and:

- the fee level is prohibitive for the learner due to their employment and/or benefits status
- the qualification is substantial and supports future employment prospects then the college has discretion to offer the following:
- Up to 100% of fee chargeable for essential skill qualifications (English/Maths/Digital/ESOL)
- Up to 100% of fee chargeable for substantial vocational or occupational qualifications
 - Funding for courses that are being undertaken for personal interest or leisure purposes will not be supported through hardship funding. Courses where Student Loans Company loan funding applies will not be supported.
- Support for students on a traineeship including the work placement element

Please note: Asylum Seekers that are eligible will be supported in the form of course related books, equipment, uniform, UCAS or a travel pass. In exceptional circumstances cash payments can be made.

Assessment of the level of support needed for each programme of study will be carried out in conjunction with information supplied by curriculum teams regarding course-related costs. Bursary funds 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. Bursary funds are not available to cover costs/charges for items without which a student could not complete their course (these are covered within the course fee).

20 + Childcare Funding

- Aged 20 or over on the first day of the course (Students aged under 20 years old should apply for Care 2 Learn – see above)
- the parent/guardian/main carer of a child/children that are of compulsory school age or under

Support Available:

- Payments will only be made to an Ofsted registered childcare provider after any free Government entitlement to childcare has been exhausted.
- The maximum award given for the first child is £260 per week and up to £415 per week for more than one child. This is up a maximum of 36 term weeks. Where applicable, support towards a retainer fee for College holidays (excluding the summer holidays) will be payable up to 50% of the maximum award as stated above (the government free childcare places are omitted from our calculations).
- Support will be payable for timetabled sessions and agreed work placements only.
- We may pay up to a maximum of 1 week notice where a student withdraws from their programme of study.

The amount of funding available for childcare is limited and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds. In exceptional circumstances and where funds allow, the maximum award may be increased.

Childcare payments will be made via invoice at the end of a calendar month, in line with the College's payment terms.

Please note: Bursary awards may affect entitlement to some benefits. If a student is in receipt of DLA/PIP and ESA, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

7.7 Advanced Learner Loans Bursary

Individual Eligibility Criteria:

- Aged 19 or over on the first day of the course and;
- In receipt of Advanced Learner Loan approved by the Student Loan Company

Support Available:

Hardship

- course-related costs, including course trips, books and equipment (where these costs are not included in the tuition fee)
- transport costs for getting to and from College
- professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies related to the course (e.g. Professional Body membership / UCAS fees)
- exceptional support with domestic emergencies and emergency accommodation provided by others, or by providing items or services or cash direct to the student.

This can be in the form of a grant or repayable loan provided by you for course related costs.

Assessment of the level of support needed for each programme of study will be carried out in conjunction with information supplied by curriculum teams regarding course related costs. Bursary funds 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. Bursary funds are not available to cover costs/charges for items without which a student could not complete their course (these are covered within the course fee).

Childcare Eligibility

To be eligible for support with childcare costs you must be:

- the parent/guardian/main carer of a child/children that are of compulsory school age or under.
- Aged 20 or over at the start date of the course. (Students aged under 20 years old should apply for Care 2 Learn – see above)

Childcare Support:

- Payments will only be made to an Ofsted registered childcare provider after any free Government entitlement to childcare has been exhausted.
- The maximum award given for the first child is £260 per week and up to £415 per week for more than one child. This is up a maximum of 36 term weeks. Where applicable, support towards a retainer fee for College holidays (excluding summer holidays) will be payable up to 50% of the maximum award as stated above.
- Support will only be payable for timetabled sessions and placements only.

The amount of funding available for childcare is limited and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds. In exceptional circumstances and where funds allow, the maximum award may be increased.

For those with additional Learning Support needs who are in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan, please refer to the Additional Learning Support Policy.

Where a learner is on 2 courses at the same time, they can be funded by ASF Learner Support or Loans Bursary to support their studies.

Please note, it is a student's responsibility to tell the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about any student support contributions being made by the College, as student support payments may affect eligibility to state benefits.

7.8 University Centre Loan & Financial Support

University Centre Support Loan

Individual Eligibility Criteria:

- Be enrolled on a programme of prescribed HE
- Have satisfactory engagement at the time of application
- Have a financial need that can be mitigated by a loan that can reasonably be expected to be repaid over a short period.

Support Available:

- support with domestic emergencies and emergency accommodation
- course-related costs, including course trips, books and equipment (where these costs are not included in the tuition fee)
- transport costs
- professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies
- support provided by others, providing items or services, or cash direct to the student.

The cost of the support provided to the student will be in the form of a repayable loan.

University Centre Bursary Fund

Individual Eligibility Criteria:

- Be enrolled on a programme of prescribed HE
- Have satisfactory engagement at the time of application
- Have a financial need that cannot be mitigated by a loan that can reasonably be expected to be repaid over a short period.

Support Available:

- support with domestic emergencies and emergency accommodation
- course-related costs, including course trips, books and equipment (where these costs are not included in the tuition fee)
- transport costs
- professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies
- support provided by others, or by providing items or services or cash direct to the student
- The college may award college meals on a discretionary basis where a financial need has been identified.

The support to the student will be in the form of a non-repayable grant.

7.9 Student Benefit Fund

The College has a fund to support students in financial need where they may not meet the eligibility criteria for the other bursary support packages as set out above.

The College will use this fund to subsidise all full-time learners with items such as travel passes, support to participate in work placements, loan of IT equipment, scholarships within the Health & Social Care cadets and sport shadow squad areas, where learners are not eligible to fall into one of the other bursary funds.

The College will assess need on an individual basis, and will apply discretion as appropriate and where funds allow.

We will also use this fund to offer a Free Breakfast (as determined by the College) every timetabled day before gam and a piece of free fruit will be available during the day to all students.

7.10 Emergency Support

Under certain circumstances students may face genuine emergencies (e.g. no accommodation, unforeseen costs or charges, theft or loss of possessions or money). In these circumstances, students should contact the Safeguarding and Prevent Team or Student Services either directly or via their tutor.

Following consultation with the tutor, Safeguarding and Prevent Manager and / or Head of Finance / Careers and Learner Services Manager every effort will be made to provide the financial assistance to ensure the student can continue with their studies. Under these circumstances it may not be necessary to provide evidence of family income and costs.

8. Course Fees and Course Related Costs

Course and Exam Fees

- 8.1 Students aged 16-18 (including those aged 19-24 with and EHCP) on DfE funded full or part-time learning on 31st August 2025 are not charged fees related to tuition, initial exams or any aspect of enrolment. Students will be charged for the cost of A Level examination re-sits or may be charged in other areas e.g. GCSE retakes to improve existing grades. 16-18-year-old students can apply for support with these costs. Each application will be considered on its own merit within the College criteria set out above and is subject to available funds.
- 8.2 Non-fully funded Students aged 19+ will only be supported with course and exam fee costs where alternative means of financial support are not available and financial need can be evidenced. Students who are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan are unable to apply for financial support with course fees.

Kit, Equipment and Uniform

- 8.3 Details of course related kit, equipment and uniform information will be provided in the student welcome pack and at enrolment. Bursary eligible students can receive free kit, equipment and uniform (subject to bursary assessment and available funds). In addition, in accordance with DfE funding rules students aged 19 years and above who are fully funded are entitled to free materials and uniform where their learning aim cannot be achieved without them.

Please note: where clothing or equipment is necessary for the student's health and safety a charge may be made for clothing and equipment that the student retains but the student will have the option of borrowing the clothing or equipment free of charge.

- 8.4 Kit, equipment and uniform will be purchased and issued by the College. Where the student has already purchased kit, equipment or uniform then payment will be made into the student's bank account by BACS, once evidence of purchase inc. the receipt has been received by Student Services.
- 8.5 All items purchased using Bursary funds remain College property and will be retained by the College.

Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS)

- 8.6 The cost of a DBS check will be covered within the course costs where it is an essential part of the study programme, except for co-funded students who will be required to pay but may be eligible to apply for financial support.
- 8.7 Where a DBS is not an essential part of the study program and a student chooses a work/industry placement where a DBS is required, then the student can apply for financial support towards the DBS cost.

UCAS Fees

- 8.8 Bursary eligible students can receive support for their UCAS fees. Payment will be made directly to UCAS.

Online Learning Support

- 8.9 In exceptional circumstances, IT support may be available to support students with their independent studies if the student is bursary eligible or meets one of the criteria below.

Eligibility Criteria:

- does not have internet access at home and/or
- does not access to a suitable device (i.e. laptop/tablet) to complete the necessary online course work
- Bursary eligible (excluding Student Benefit Fund)

Support Available:

- Loan of a suitable IT device
- The college has a limited supply of IT devices and reserves the right to assess the need of the learner based on course requirements, financial hardship and individual learning needs.

- 8.10 Equipment loans are subject to the students signed agreement with the College's terms and conditions (parental/guardian signature is required for students under the age of 18). Equipment must be returned to the College on completion of the study programme and in the same condition in which it was received.
- 8.11 Resources are finite and access to laptops for all bursary eligible students is not guaranteed.

9. Travel Costs

Travel to College

- 9.1 The College operates a number of bus services through Transdev
- 9.2 Free bus passes are available to bursary eligible 16-18-year-old students, those aged 19-24 with EHCP and 19 + students on accredited courses. Subsidised termly bus passes are available for 16 – 18-year-old students and bursary eligible 19+ students on non-accredited courses. Where bus travel is not a viable option, alternative transport will be considered e.g., rail travel, mileage etc. up to a maximum of £780 per year (this may be increased for exceptional circumstances).
- 9.3 Students who are resident outside of the travel pass area, or in exceptional circumstances agreed at the College's discretion, can apply for a travel grant. Support will be determined on individual circumstances with bursary support limited to a maximum of £780 per year. Evidence of costs, e.g., receipts, will be required. Travel grants will be paid into the student's bank account via BACS transfer.
- 9.4 If there are excessive demands on travel costs, priority will be given to students who live more than 2 miles from the College campus site that they are enrolled. Distance will be calculated using the shortest safe walking distance as identified on Google maps.
- 9.5 Students will be issued with one travel pass (e-ticket) each term for the duration of their studies at College and must make an application each term to confirm the pass is still required.

For Nelson and Colne College campus only:

- 9.6 Other than in exceptional circumstances, students issued with a car park pass will not be entitled to a subsidised bus pass or other financial travel support.

EHCP Students

- 9.7 Students with an EHCP can apply to the Local Authority for support with travel, if it is detailed within the plan. If there are any unforeseen issues with Local Authority assessments, students can apply for temporary financial support from the College.
- 9.8 Any exceptional circumstances and Special Educational Needs that do not meet the Local Authority Transport Policy will be considered during assessment and through the appeals procedure where necessary. Please note that any appeals against a decision made by the Local Authority must be made to that Local Authority and not the College.

10. Trips and Visits

- 10.1 Bursary cannot be used to pay for non-educational trips and visits.

For students entitled to the 16-19 Bursaries - they must be a compulsory part of the student's curriculum, i.e. the student cannot achieve their qualification without it.

For students entitled to the Adult Learner Support Fund or Advanced Learner Loans or University Centre Bursaries – they are only eligible where costs are not already included in the tuition fee or full funding rate.

- 10.2 Financial support towards the cost of mandatory course trips and visits can be provided for bursary eligible students. The maximum contribution to any single Educational trip/visit will not exceed £520.
- 10.3 Where financial support is provided, payment will be made through internal College transfers only.

11. Application and Eligibility Criteria

- 11.1 Application for financial assistance from the College's Bursary Funds must be made via the online application portal which can be accessed from the College websites. All new full-time applicants will be sent details on applying in their joining instructions. Applicants requiring support with their online application should contact the Student Services team. ESOL learners will be given the option of applying via a "financial assistance form" for ease with their application.
- 11.2 All applications must hold a signed declaration by either the student or their family to confirm that the evidence that they have provided is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. This declaration confirms that the learner has understood the terms and conditions of receiving a bursary from the college.
- 11.3 All applications and supporting evidence are treated confidentially.
- 11.4 Applications will only be processed from enrolled students as defined by the College. Students must make their application as soon as possible as funds are limited and will be paid on a 'first come, first served' basis.

- 11.5 All funds are means-tested and applicants will be required to provide evidence that their household income is less than £37,500 (excluding Care to Learn and applicants with additional household dependents see 10.4). However exceptional circumstances will be taken into consideration.
- 11.6 All income and benefits (including housing benefit, council tax benefit, child tax credit, universal credit etc.) are considered. However, the College does not consider Child Benefit, Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment when calculating total household income.
- 11.7 For parents/guardians or students who are self - employed, the College will assess income based on Gross Profit, taking in to account any business expenditure. For example, household items, mortgage and food would not be deducted from Gross Profit but stationery and machinery servicing would be deducted.
- 11.8 An assessment is made based on a completed application detailing income from employment and/or benefits along with supporting evidence of all declared income. It may be necessary for students to discuss their circumstances with a member of Student Services team or Safeguarding and Prevent team.
- 11.9 In order for funding to be awarded, the College expects students to adhere to the College standards for behaviour and have a minimum attendance of 80% (80% engagement for HE), other than in exceptional circumstances. The College may withhold or retrieve money paid from a bursary fund where a student:
- is involved in disciplinary proceedings;
 - has been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays);
 - has decided to withdraw from their study programme
- 11.10 Please refer to Appendix 1 for the bursary support available including maximum awards. Please note each application is assessed individually and awards are based on financial need, available funds and the DfE funding rules and College policy.
- 11.11 Late applications (received after 30 November following the start of the academic year) and incomplete applications at that date will only be back dated to the start of the academic year at the College's discretion.
- 11.12 Applications will be considered where funds are available throughout the academic year.
- 11.13 Funds are limited and once they have been allocated in full the College reserves the right to close the fund.

12. Record Keeping, Complaints and Appeals

- 12.1 Bursary application forms, associated evidence provided, assessment and payment documentation will be retained for a period of 6 years after the end of this academic year. Please refer to the privacy notices on the College websites for further information or speak to a member of the Student Services team.
- 12.2 The College complies with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and associates Data Protection Legislation.
- 12.3 Should you have any reason not to be satisfied with how the College has handled your bursary application the College's Complaints Policy and Procedure should be followed.

The Complaints Policy and Procedure and complaints form can be found on the College's websites:

East Lancashire Learning Group: <https://eastlancslearning.ac.uk/>

Nelson Campus: <https://ncc.eastlancslearning.ac.uk/>

Accrington Campus: <https://arc.eastlancslearning.ac.uk/>

Lancashire Adult Learning: <https://arc.eastlancslearning.ac.uk/>

Alternatively, you can contact the Student Services team in person at one of our college campuses or via email/phone:

Email: StudentServices@eastlancslearning.ac.uk

Nelson campus: 01282 440209

Accrington campus: 01254 354143

Lancashire Adult Learning: 0333 003 1717

- 12.4 These procedures must be exhausted before a student/parent/guardian contacts the DfE.

13 Dissemination

- 13.1 A copy of this policy can be found on:
- Nelson and Colne College website
 - Accrington and Rossendale College website
 - Lancashire Adult Learning website
 - East Lancashire UC website
 - East Lancashire Learning Group Staff Hub
 - East Lancashire Learning Moodle

14 Monitoring and Review

- 14.1 The policy will be reviewed annually by the East Lancashire Learning Group's Assistant Principal – Finance and HR

15 Related Policies/Procedures & Documents

15.1 Documents related to the policy are:

- Fees Policy 2026/27
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Additional Learning Support Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- HE Financial Support Process

16 Management Responsibility

16.1 Management responsibility for this policy rests with the Assistant Principal – Finance and HR, with the day-to-day implementation of this policy resting with the Head of Finance, Careers and Learner Services Manager, Safeguarding, Prevent & Wellbeing Manager and Dean of Higher Education.

Appendix 1

Support is subject to eligibility criteria, assessment and available funds.

All students are entitled to a piece of Free Fruit and a Free Healthy Breakfast for each day of study.

The College will allow £37,500 household income threshold stated below.

Bursary Fund	What Students can get (subject to available funds)	Eligibility requirements (See policy for further detailed eligibility information)
DfE 16 – 19 Bursary Fund	- Free Travel Pass including evenings and weekends; or - Travel grant of up to £780 per year - Free Kit/Equipment/Uniform/Books - Free UCAS Fees - Educational trip costs covered up to a maximum of £520 (see grid) - Support with industry placements - Hardship support	Household income less than £37,500 per year as evidenced by proof of parent/guardian income or eligible benefit evidence.
DfE 16 – 19 Vulnerable Bursary Fund	- Up to £1200 of support that can be used for travel and/or kit/equipment/uniform. - Bursary paid every month.	Defined Vulnerable groups only.
DfE 16 – 19 Free Meals	A free daily lunch up to the value of £4.00 per day	Specific benefit evidence as set out by the Government to show unemployment or low household income
Care to Learn Scheme (Childcare)	Help with childcare costs up to a maximum of £180 per child per week.	Under 20 years old at course start date.
Apprenticeship Bursary for Care Leavers	£3000 paid in instalments over the first year of apprenticeship.	Been in the care of a local authority.
DfE Adult Skills Fund (ASF) Learner Support Fund	Free Travel /Kit /Equipment /Uniform /Books /UCAS Hardship support Childcare: - Help with childcare costs up to a maximum of: £260 per week - term time (1 child) £415 per week - term time (2+ children) <i>50% of above values non-term time (excluding summer holidays).</i>	- Aged 19 + on first day of course. (exception childcare 20+ on first day of course) - Household income of less than £37,500 per year - Enrolled on an ASF funded course.

Bursary Fund	What Students can get (subject to available funds)	Eligibility requirements (See policy for further detailed eligibility information)
Advanced Learner Loans Bursary	- Help with childcare costs up to a maximum of: £260 per week - term time (1 child) £415 per week - term time (2+ children) <i>£100 non-term time (excluding summer holidays)</i> - Free Travel/ Kit /Equipment /Uniform /Books /UCAS - Hardship support	- Aged 19 + on first day of course. - Household income of less than £37,500 per year - In receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan.
Student Benefit Fund	- Subsidised termly Transdev bus pass for £72 includes evening and weekend travel (College approved bus services only) - Subsidised - Kit/Equipment/Uniform/Books, up to a maximum cost of £165 - Hardship support	- All Students. - Individual circumstances considered.