

STUDENT GUIDE TO EDUCATIONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES **(EMA)**

**Keep this information in a safe place
you may need to refer to it throughout the year**

Contact: Mrs O'Connor (EMA co-ordinator) Main Office

When you begin your studies you will be assigned a personal tutor who will help and advise you and ensure that you make the most of your time at college. Your tutor will have an overall view of your attendance, work and behaviour throughout the college year and will advise Mrs O'Connor immediately if any of these fall below the standard required for you to receive your EMA. Your attendance will be monitored and reviewed with your tutor on a weekly basis.

Once you receive your letter of entitlement and Contract 1 from the Approved Payment Body (APB) you should take it immediately to Mrs O'Connor who will ask you to sign a Learning Agreement (Contract 2). This agreement must be taken home for your parents/carers to sign and once returned to college your weekly payments will begin. This form is kept by the college and explains what is expected from you during your time at Notre Dame e.g. your attendance, behaviour, approach to your studies. It is in terms within this agreement that your performance will be monitored and your EMA payments made, or withheld.

One of the conditions of receiving an EMA is that you achieve 100% attendance every week. Sometimes there may be circumstances that prevent you being at college which cannot be avoided and for which you will not lose your EMA. These are called 'authorised absences'.

In all cases evidence must be provided for absences to be authorised.

**This can be either a phone call from parents/carers
or appropriate documentation.**

Please see Attendance Guidelines opposite.

Weekly Payments are made one week in arrears i.e. the payment made into students' bank accounts every Friday is for the previous week. If a weekly payment is suspended you will receive a letter informing you of the reason why.

Bonus Payments are made in January and July of the first year, and in September, January and July of subsequent years.

At the end of the Autumn and Summer Terms your tutor will determine whether your performance for the period meets with the requirements, spelt out in your EMA Contract 2, for receiving the bonus payments.

Attendance Guidelines

Absence reporting Student Services Help Desk (Main Office 0113 2946644)

- Parents/carers should telephone the help desk either before the absence or before 10a.m. on the first day of absence.
- If sickness absence is for more than one day parents/carers should either telephone the help desk on the morning of each subsequent day or state the expected duration of the illness on the first morning.
- Documentation for planned absences should be presented either before the period of absence, or on the morning of the student's return to college.
- If a student is ill whilst at College s/he must complete a signing out slip at the help desk and a parent should telephone to authorise the absence.

Acceptable reasons to 'authorise' an absence:

- An illness as evidenced above.
- A hospital or orthodontist appointment that cannot be arranged outside college hours. Appointment cards must be presented as evidence BEFORE the visit.
- Religious holiday / festival - up to a maximum of 3 days per year.
- A particular need to look after a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities (this should not be a regular event).
- Attending the funeral of a close family relative or friend (authorisation should be sought before the funeral).
- A driving test and the lesson directly prior to the test (not a lesson, these should be made out of college hours). Authorisation should be sought BEFORE the day of the test.
- Severe problems with transport (such as rail strike, or problem with long distance bus services).
- A careers related interview or a visit to university to attend an open day or interview. Paper work must be provided BEFORE the day of the visit.
- Moving house - 1 day will be authorised. Authorisation should be sought BEFORE the day of the move.
- Significant extra-curricular activity, where the activity reflects a significant level of personal achievement, for example taking part in regional or national sporting event. Authorisation should be sought BEFORE the event.

Acceptable documentation for authorised absence would be:

- A medical certificate.
- A hospital/orthodontist appointment card.
- An appointment letter for driving/theory test.
- An appointment card from a careers/connexions advisor.
- A letter of invitation for a university interview/open day - up to a maximum of five days.
- A staff correction slip for incorrect marks.

Unauthorised absences

- Family holidays in term time are not an acceptable absence.
- Absence because of fatigue due to holidays or travel is not an acceptable absence.
- Driving lessons are not an authorised absence.
- Absence as a result of food/alcohol indulgence is not an authorised absence.
- Hair and beauty appointments or anything similar are not acceptable absences.
- Minding the house or taking charge of a delivery are not acceptable absences.

Appeals

If a payment is stopped and you feel that you have been unfairly treated you may wish to appeal against the decision. An appeal is made by obtaining the appropriate form from Mrs O'Connor our EMA co-ordinator and filling in all the necessary details including why you think you have been treated unfairly. Please note that if you wish to make an appeal you must do so within **FIVE working days of the non-payment of your money.**

Your appeal will be considered by the Vice Principal in charge of Student Support (Mrs Rothbury) who may wish to consult your personal tutor and you will be notified of the outcome. If your appeal is upheld the college will contact the APB to arrange for the re-instatement of any EMA payments.

**PLEASE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LSC
GUIDANCE ON AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED
ABSENCES (ATTACHED)**

RECEIVING OF PUBLIC MONEY UNDER FALSE PRETENCES IS FRAUD

It is an offence to forge EMA attendance documents and the approved payment body will seek to recover payment that has been falsely claimed.