



Notre Dame

CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

STUDENT SUPPORT FUND & BURSARY SCHEME POLICY

This policy adheres to and should be applied with due consideration to the College's commitment to the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education.

This policy has been reviewed in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mission Statement

Our mission inspired by the Christian tradition is to be a community based on faith, hope, and love; developing each individual intellectually, emotionally and spiritually to achieve their full potential.

To achieve this, we will:

- Provide a welcoming, supportive community where everyone is valued.
- Provide a high quality, meaningful education which encourages the development of the whole person, inspired by the Notre Dame tradition.
- Promote a caring environment, rooted in the virtues of service, kindness, gratitude, and respect.
- Work together for the benefit of each person as well as the wider community.
- Recognise, celebrate, and treasure, without exception, the unique gifts and dignity of each person, ensuring equality and fairness for all, as found in the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

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PURPOSE

The Purpose of the Student Bursary Fund is to:

- Support and retain students who face financial hardship as a barrier to continuing in education
- Promote a positive attitude to learning
- The purpose of the bursary is not to promote individual institutions

1. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- The bursary is based on need, attendance, punctuality, effort, and behaviour
- The bursary should be applied fairly and consistently and in line with our commitment to equality of opportunity
- The process must be easily understood and accessible
- The process should identify eligible students in a timely fashion
- The scheme should be designed to maximise the amount of the fund available to support students.

2. SUPPORT

Support will be available for the following:

- Travel to and from College (meeting the 1.4 + mileage criteria, a discretionary award can be made in exceptional circumstances)
- Free meals (breakfast or lunch) usually from the College's catering service
- Examination re-sit fee (possible to fund another in exceptional circumstances only)
- Essential materials and equipment
- Curriculum Essential trips and visits (does not include overseas or enhancement activities)
- Loaning of a laptop for the academic year
- Other expenses associated with study at the College

3. ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Available to 16 – 18 students (i.e., aged under 19 at the START of their course)

3.1 Vulnerable Students Bursary

a) Vulnerable students who are defined as:

- Students who are in or have recently left local authority care
- Students in receipt of income support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) in place of IS, in their own right
- Students in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or UC and in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), in their own right

b) Vulnerable Student Support Award

- Vulnerable Bursary: Students categorised in the vulnerable group will receive all possible support from the college listed in Section 2. For example, free meals and travel to and from college (must meet mileage criteria)
- Emergency (P3): Appropriate evidence to show that the financial problem is extreme and short

3.2 16-19 Discretionary Students

- a) **Students must provide documentation showing their earned household income as on or below £35,000 p/a**
- b) **16-19 Discretionary Support Award**
 - **Priority 1: Students who are eligible for free college meals in line with the Government Guidelines for free meals in Further Education. The student must provide one of the following documents:**
 - Income Support
 - income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - 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 (UC)
 - **Priority 2: Students whose household income is on or below £35,000**

Appropriate evidence which clearly states that your earned household income is on or below £35,000 will receive all support aside from free meals. The bus pass award is dependent on mileage.

4. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

When assessing income, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) paid to the student is disregarded. However, the element paid for mobility may be considered as income when assessing transport costs.

Students with an EHCP or statement of Special Educational Needs or Social Services Adult Assessment of Need must submit a copy when applying for travel assistance.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged over 19 may be supported with the cost of transport subject to the following conditions.

- The student is not entitled to LA support
 - The student is not receiving support for transport costs from another source
 - The student cannot travel independently
 - The student is unable to study with another provider closer to home
- Learners with limited mobility may be entitled to apply for a Mobility Pass.

5. APPLYING FOR SUPPORT

Applications must be made using the PayMyStudent portal available from the College website. All applications must have the relevant supporting documentary evidence attached or available.

Students will receive an email within 2 weeks informing them of the outcome of their application.

No assistance will be paid to or on behalf of a learner until they are enrolled as a student with the College.

Funding is only for one year. Students must reapply for funding at the start of each consecutive academic year where a programme is for more than one year in duration

6. DEFINING HARDSHIP

All personal circumstances and any available information will be taken into consideration when establishing need. Applicants will be expected to investigate all avenues of support before applying to the Bursary Funds e.g., Care to Learn, Universal Credit etc.

7. ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR CONCERNS

7.1 Attendance

Support from the Bursary Funds is conditional upon satisfactory attendance of at least 95% for all subjects.

Although 95% attendance is regarded as satisfactory, the College may take into account all personal circumstances when determining satisfactory attendance, therefore, staff may, in exceptional circumstances, present a case where they consider the attendance pattern to be 'satisfactory' and therefore eligible for support due to extenuating circumstances.

Unsatisfactory attendance will be brought to the attention of the Head of Students and following investigation support may be withdrawn

7.2 Behaviour

Support from the Bursary Fund is conditional upon satisfactory behaviour, which covers: effort, return of homework/coursework on time and any disciplinary action e.g., disciplinary procedures.

8. STUDENTS WHO WITHDRAW

If a student withdraws from their studies before completion, the College may request repayment of any previously allocated funds and/or the return of any items of equipment provided through the Bursary Funds

9. INCOME ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE

To qualify for support, you or your parents/carers must provide the following evidence:

9.1 16-18 Students:

Vulnerable Student evidence:

Documentation to prove that you fall within one of the categories listed under Section 3.1 above i.e., Care or Benefits documents.

- **Looked after children:** Student will need to provide a letter from Social Worker stating a section 31 of the Children's Act 1989 care order
- **Care Leaver:** Student will need to provide a letter from Social Worker stating section 24 of the Children's Act care order
- **Independent Living:** Student must provide benefit documentation they claim in their own right, such as Universal Credit

Discretionary Student evidence:

Documentation to prove that you fall within our income threshold, showing hardship. This should show annual household earned income of no more than £35,000 i.e., Income documents or Benefits documents.

- **Priority 1: Students who are eligible for free college meals in line with the Government Guidelines for free meals in Further Education. The student must provide one of the following documents:**
 - Income Support
 - income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - 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 (UC) with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 for each year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)

- **Priority 2: Students whose earned household income is on or below £35,000**

Appropriate evidence which clearly states that your earned household income is on or below £35,000

If funding is restricted, it may be that Priority 2 applications are only considered after Priorities 1 and Transport have been covered from the limited funds available. If there is a sufficient balance of funds remaining this will be used to justify another funding round for Priority 2 students.

Priority 2: documentation/evidence required will be:

- Eligibility is determined by Net household income of the student, their partner, or parents/guardians and/or carers living at one address. Income of siblings and student's personal part time earnings will be disregarded.

9.2 19+ Students

- **Priority 1: Students who are eligible for free college meals in line with the Government Guidelines for free meals in Further Education. The student must provide one of the following documents:**
 - Income Support
 - income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - 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 (UC) ***See below for details.**
- **Priority 2: Students whose earned household income is on or below £35,000**
Appropriate evidence which clearly states that your earned household income is on or below £35,000
***See below for details.**

***19+ Priority 1:**

- The student must be a 19+ continuer, meaning they must be continuing on the study programme they began aged 16-18 or have an EHCP
- Eligibility is determined by net household income of the student, their partner, or parents/guardians and/or carers living at one address. Income of siblings and student's personal part time earnings will be disregarded.

Where a student's living circumstances are unusual e.g., living with a friend, grand parents or siblings, cases will be assessed individually.

Students are required to inform the College of any change in their home/financial circumstances. Occasionally it may be necessary to carry out eligibility checks where students are receiving continuous funding. If income is above the threshold, support will be withdrawn.

Income Evidence

Income will be assessed on current salary and/or benefits into the household. Disability Living Allowance paid to the student will be disregarded when assessing income.

Any relevant evidence available and dated within the last three months may be used, including:

- Tax Credit Award Notification (TCAN) / Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance / Universal Credit (UC)
- Letters from DWP/pension authorities
- P60
- Last 3 months' salary slips (if paid monthly)
- Last 4 weeks' wage slips (if paid weekly)
- Where self-employed a copy of latest annual accounts or appropriate HMRC documentation
- Asylum Seeker Home Office Notification

Where there is a significant change to household income during the academic year (i.e., due to redundancy), and income falls to within the income threshold, an application for support may be submitted. under 16-18 Priority 2 or 19+ Priority 2.

Where a student or their parent/carer/partner is unwilling to provide evidence, no assessment can take place therefore, support will not be available.

Where a student is unable to provide the required evidence for legitimate reasons, an assessment will be made using any available evidence and taking into account

student/family circumstances.

Where a student lives with a parent and a partner (not second parent) the total household Income of both partners will be taken into account

10. PAYMENTS AND ALLOCATIONS

Wherever possible, payments will be made in the form of goods and services. Otherwise, payments will be made by bank transfer.

Payments may be made in the following ways:

- For equipment and materials or trips, payments are usually made to a supplier/agent on the student's behalf using the ND College Web shop where possible
- In respect of travel: students will receive a bus pass gifted to their M-Card app. Where the student lives outside the M-Card area, a monthly payment will be made to the student in arrears to purchase their travel tickets with proof of purchase. Both subject to high attendance
- In respect to free meals, students will be credited with the equivalent of £5.00 per day on the Time2Eat App.

11. APPEALS FOR ALL SCHEMES

Applicants refused support or whose support has been withdrawn due to breach of the conditions for attendance at all subjects or behaviour issues; have the right of appeal. This appeal should be made to the Director of Finance and Resources within 10 days of the College's decision. The reason for appeal must be given and any supporting documentation or information must be provided. This will be dealt with in accordance with the College appeals procedures

12. SAFEGUARDING THE SCHEME

It may be necessary to carry out eligibility checks where students are receiving continuous funding.

Random attendance checks will be authorised by Staff to ensure eligibility for continued support.

Systems and procedures are in place to ensure that the Bursary Funds are managed appropriately and effectively, and they are subject to both internal and external audit.

Any student found to have made a false claim for financial support, or anyone who disregards the conditions for assistance may be subject to the College's Disciplinary Procedure and a repayment of the funds will be sought.

All applications for Bursary support must be approved by the College

Students must provide current (within the last three months) documentary evidence as required.

Where staff suspect that all is not in order i.e., non-disclosure of income, tampering of evidence etc support will be withheld.

Payments may be refused, suspended, or reclaimed where students fail to meet the conditions of assistance.

13. EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHEMES

The success of financial support offered to students will be measured by analysing student retention and achievement. In addition, to canvas learner views specific questions relating to financial support for students may be asked as part of the College's quality monitoring processes