

POLAP 28 Childcare Funds Policy

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1 Policy

- 1.1 This policy sets out the position from which New College Lanarkshire will administer the Childcare Funds that it receives annually and how these funds will be distributed to students. The Policy and related Procedures have been written to ensure that there are clear and fair guidelines for all Students and will provide a framework to ensure that all Students to achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 New College Lanarkshire is committed to providing opportunities for learning in a caring and supportive environment which respects the individual. The Childcare Funds Policy and Procedures are designed to assist the College to enable Students to achieve their full potential.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The policy covers both Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) Childcare funds, including the lone parent Childcare grant (LPCG).

3 Definitions

- 3.1 Childcare Funds are intended to provide non-repayable assistance for students with children in order for them to access and/or continue in education and are paid in addition to any other forms of student support. Childcare Funds are supplementary to core sources of student funding such as Bursaries and Student Loans.

4 Key Principles

- 4.1 Childcare Funds will be administered and distributed entirely in accordance with the relevant policies and guidance set out by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and will operate within the framework of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 4.2 The assessment process is based on need and all funding is means tested against total household income. If you have a household income above £46,500 you will not be eligible to apply for this fund. This is in line with HMRC Child Tax Credit Assessment <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-credits/tax-credits>.
- 4.3 All alternative forms of funding available to the Student must be accessed before any application for funding from the Childcare funds will be considered.
- 4.4 These funds are cash limited and when they have been fully committed, no further funds will be allocated. However, the assessment process will be carried out for all application forms received and any Student who satisfies the criteria for an award will be placed on a reserve list, should further funding become available.
- 4.5 The amount of funds allocated to each child is capped to maximize the number of children qualifying for assistance.

5 Eligibility Criteria

- 5.1 Students applying for Childcare support must have dependent children and must be attending College on a course of study.
- 5.2 All Childcare funding is subject to the availability of funds.
- 5.3 The submission of an application for Childcare Funds is not a guarantee that funding will be awarded.
- 5.4 Childcare awards will not be made to any learner who has a spouse or partner who is at home during College hours and is able and available to look after the child/children.
- 5.5 All Childcare providers must be registered with the Care Inspectorate.
- 5.6 Students nominating Childcare providers must ensure that the provider is registered with the Local Authority and fully insured.
- 5.7 The College will prioritise allocation of places to the college Nursery and will support external Childcare providers when a College Nursery place is unavailable. The College will have regard to established Childcare arrangements and extenuating circumstances. Should College nursery places become available through the academic session, these will be offered to students with external childcare arrangements; it will be at the Students' discretion as to whether to take up this place.
- 5.8 Students applying for childcare support will be required to provide evidence that they are the parent or legal guardian (Tax Credit Award Notice or Screen Shot of Universal Credit Award, SAAS Award Notice, Bursary/EMA Award Letter, Letter of Entitlement from the Department of Work and Pensions, birth certificate/s of children).

6 Assessment Process

- 6.1 All applications will be assessed in date of receipt order, providing all relevant documents have been submitted.
- 6.2 All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.
- 6.3 All applications will be means-tested.
- 6.4 The maximum financial support offered to students should not exceed College time and placement time (as defined in the Course Design Document) plus timetabled study time and travel time. In total, this must not exceed 40 hours per week nor 8 hours per day.
- 6.5 The amount of funds allocated is capped on a "per-child, per-day" basis. This assistance is limited to the College Academic Calendar (37-week period) and the total award per household will not exceed £16,500.

7 Conditions of Awards

- 7.1 Before any payments from the Childcare Funds can be released the students will be required to accept their award via this hyperlink: <https://funding.nclanarkshire.ac.uk/CAMS>. This Acceptance Statement is confirmation the Student wishes to receive the award, that they agree to the conditions attached to the award and that the payment details held by the College are accurate.

All acceptances of award must be accepted within **two weeks** of the award letter. After this period of time the award will be withdrawn.

- 7.2 The retention of awards is dependent on the Student maintaining satisfactory attendance (in accordance with the College's Student Learner Attendance Policy), conduct and progress on their course.
- 7.3 Where an award is terminated, the amount due will be calculated to the last **regular** date of attendance and the Student will be required to repay any overpayment.
- 7.4 Any changes in the Student's financial or personal circumstances which may have an effect on their award must be notified to the Student Funding section.
- 7.5 Where a Student has made a false statement on their form, or omitted to notify the College about a change in their personal circumstances, their application will be withdrawn.
- 7.6 Should a situation arise whereby the Student does not attend College and does not inform the College of their absence, but places their child/children at the childcare provider (including the College Nursery) during these absences, it will be left to the discretion of the Financial Controller to authorise the withdrawal of childcare financial support or removal of a College Nursery place. A letter will be sent to the Student informing them of the decision.
- 7.7 The College reserves the right to recover from the student any overpayment made.

8 Payment of Award

- 8.1 All payments for Childcare will be paid 2 weekly in arrears directly to the Childcare providers account.

9 Appeals

- 9.1 All Students have the right to appeal against the level or refusal of an award or payment. Appeals should be in writing and e-mailed to funding.appeals@nclan.ac.uk with the subject heading 'Childcare Fund Appeals'. The decision of an appeal is final.

10 Responsibilities

10.1 The Financial Controller has overall responsibility for this policy.

10.2 The Student Funding Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring funds are distributed and administered in line with this policy and relevant SFC Guidelines;
- Overseeing the on-going development and improvement on the New College Lanarkshire Childcare Funds Procedure;
- Dealing with student appeals and complaints relevant to Childcare Funds;
- Liaising with the Finance Team in coordinating the Childcare Funds accounts;
- Carrying out all preparation for audits;
- Updating this policy.

10.3 The Student Funding Assistants are responsible for:

- Accurately and professionally advising students on Childcare Funds;
- Distributing Childcare Funds application forms;
- Advising students submitting applications for Childcare Funds;
- Assessing applications and making effective judgments on students' eligibility and award amounts in line with both this policy and relevant SFC Guidelines;
- Monitoring the Childcare Funds budgets and providing the Student Funding Manager with accurate, up to date budget data on request;
- Gathering and checking student attendance information and using this to inform payments of Childcare Funds awards;
- Maintaining all paper and electronic records relating to Childcare Funds consistently, accurately and within confidentiality and Data Protection guidelines;
- Assisting with preparations for audits;
- Ensuring all work relevant to Childcare Funds is carried out in line with this policy and the Childcare Funds procedure;
- Leading the on-going development and improvement of the New College Lanarkshire Childcare Funds Procedure.

10.4 Responsibilities of the Student:

- It is the responsibility of Students to inform the College of any changes in their circumstances (including voluntary withdrawal from a course).
- It is the responsibility of the Student NOT to place their child/children at a childcare provider prior to receiving a letter of confirmation for financial assistance. Students who choose to place their child/children at a childcare provider in advance of confirmation of financial support will do so at their own expense. If the Student is eligible for Childcare funding, then this will be backdated to the start date of the course of study.
- Submitting application forms for childcare costs as early as possible before they start their course, no later than 1 week after the start of their course.

10.4 Responsibilities of the Student (Cont.):

- Submitting application forms for funding within deadline set by College Nursery, for those learners who have a College Nursery place. After this deadline the offer of a place in the College Nursery will be withdrawn.
- Submitting all relevant documentation (as detailed on the application form) in support of applications within 2 weeks of submission of application form.
- Students will be responsible for uploading their own documentation.

10.5 Quality approval checking of the policy is the responsibility of the Director of Quality who will also arrange for the policy to be posted on the web.

11 Linked Policies/Related Documents

11.1 New College Lanarkshire Attendance Policy.

11.2 New College Lanarkshire Childcare Funds Procedure.

11.3 New College Lanarkshire Student Support Fund Payment dates 2025-26.

12 Relevant Legislation/Guidance

12.1 2025-26 National Policy: Childcare funds for Further and Higher education students in Scotland's Colleges.

12.2 Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

12.3 GDPR. New College Lanarkshire operates this policy in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the College Data Protection and Data Security Policy.
For more information on New College Lanarkshire's data protection compliance contact Data.Protection@nclan.ac.uk