



FINANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES FRAMEWORK

Childcare Support Policy 2009/2010

1.0 Purpose

These policy and procedures detail how the cash limited childcare funds are applied and monitored.

2.0 Policy

Jewel & Esk College will endeavour to provide students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds with a contribution towards childcare costs to support their learning experience at the College.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 The funds distributed under this policy are allocated to the College as part of the College grant-in-aid settlement, which is announced before the end of April each year. Once these childcare funds are committed, no more authorised expenditure can occur.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all eligible students with dependent children, enrolled on programmes of study below Higher National Level (not covered by SAAS).
- 3.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the SFC National Policy, and the College Student Attendance, Participation and Achievement Policy and Procedures.
- 3.4 Students should note that financial support is based on need, particularly those students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. To qualify for support, students must be in receipt of a benefit or allowance or on a low income (see para 5.5).
- 3.5 The extent of financial support available to an individual student is capped in order to maximise the number of students qualifying for assistance.
- 3.6 The policy will be administered to ensure that funds are effectively allocated and disbursed fairly and accountably.

- 3.7 This policy should be read in conjunction with the College Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedures and its Disability, Race and Gender Equality Schemes.

4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Director of Finance is responsible for the management of this Policy.
- 4.2 The Quality & Qualifications Manager, via Student Services, is responsible for the management of the childcare support for students, in terms of receipt and checking of applications, and up to the point of transfer of applications to the Finance Department who will then be responsible for assessment, awarding and payments.
- 4.3 The Head of Finance and the Quality & Qualifications Manager are responsible for the effective operation of this policy.
- 4.4 The Heads of Faculty are responsible for ensuring that course information and student attendance information is entered through the college MIS system to support the conditions of the award of the childcare funding.
- 4.6 The Student Services Section is responsible for ensuring that students satisfy the eligibility conditions for a childcare award.
- 4.7 It is the responsibility of the Student Services Section to keep the Finance Section regularly informed of those students detailed on the central file (pending approval for childcare support), to enable Finance staff to estimate fund expenditure.
- 4.8 It is the responsibility of students to inform the College of any changes in their circumstances (including voluntary withdrawal from a course).
- 4.9 It is the responsibility of students 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.

5.0 Eligibility Criteria

- 5.1 Students applying for childcare support must have dependent children and be attending the College on a course of study below Higher National level.
- 5.2 Students applying for childcare support must meet the eligibility criteria set out in the SFC National policy.
- 5.3 Students applying for childcare support will be required to provide evidence that they are the parent or legal guardian (family tax credit documents, letter from DWP, birth certificate).

- 5.4 Students nominating childcare providers must ensure that the provider is registered with the Local Authority and fully insured. (The Student Services Section hold a list of registered childcare providers).
- 5.5 To qualify for childcare support, students should provide proof of one of the following:

BENEFIT/ALLOWANCE TYPE	ELIGIBILITY
Income Support*	Student or Students family must receive benefit
Working Tax Credit*	Student or Students family must receive benefit
Pension Credit*	Student or Students family must receive benefit
Housing Benefit*	Student or Students family must receive benefit
Income Based Job Seekers Allowance*	Student or Students family must receive benefit
Carer's Allowance*	Student must receive allowance
Disability Living Allowance*	Student must receive allowance
Severe Disablement Allowance*	Student must receive allowance
Employment and Support Allowance*	Student must receive allowance
Incapacity Benefit*	Student must receive benefit
Jobseeker Allowance*	Student must be a registered Job Seeker
Low income – one person in household**	2008/2009 Financial year household income up to £8,282 qualifies
Low income – with dependent children**	2008/2009 Financial year household income up to £18,977 qualifies
Asylum Seeker – (as defined in the Immigration & Asylum act 1999)	Student or Students Spouse/children are Asylum Seekers

*For audit purposes, all students must provide the College with official documentary evidence as appropriate from the Department for Work and Pensions, their local authority, the Job Centre Plus or the Inland Revenue as to their eligibility to receive a fee waiver. Such evidence must be obtained prior to the fee waiver being approved & must be attached to the standard JEC Enrolment form. Documentary evidence is required for every Enrolment.

**The student must satisfy JEC that their family's annual income does not exceed the stated amount. Evidence accepted is P60s or payslips for financial year 2008/2009.

6.0 Financial Assistance

- 6.1 The maximum financial support offered to students should not exceed College time or placement time (as defined in the Course Information Document) plus 30% study/travel time. In total, this should not exceed 32 hours per week, and should not exceed 8 hours per day.
- 6.2 The maximum allowable financial assistance should not exceed £3,280 for a first child and £1,640 for a second child.

6.3 Financial assistance will be calculated as follows:

Students applying for assistance with 1 child	up to 100% financial support
Students applying for assistance with 2 children	up to 100% financial support – 1 st child up to 50% financial support – 2 nd child
Students applying for assistance with 3 or more children	up to 100% financial support – 1 st child up to 50% financial support – 2 nd child Nil financial support – 3 rd child +

7.0 Procedure

- 7.1 Students applying for childcare financial support should complete their application form, no later than 15 working days prior to the commencement of their course of study. Late applications will be processed as soon as possible, however students should be aware of their responsibilities under paragraph 4.9 of this policy and that the funds are allocated on a first come, first paid basis and depends on the availability of cash funding.
- 7.2 A Student Advisor will assess the application form, ensuring that the student meets the eligibility criteria including evidence that he/she is the parent of legal guardian of the child/children and whether or not the student is receiving grants from other sources. The details will be held on a central file. A letter confirming financial support will be sent to the student by the Finance Section.
- 7.3 The Student Services Section will forward all completed forms and all supporting documentation to the Finance Section where they will be stored centrally in order to support authorisation of payments for childcare.
- 7.4 Academic staff will update class registers, monitor attendance, and inform the Student Services Section of any student not attending the College in accordance with the Student Attendance, Participation and Achievement Policy and Procedures, and will inform the student of any decision to withdraw childcare financial assistance.
- 7.5 Student attendance will be monitored in accordance with the Student Attendance, Participation and Achievement Policy and Procedures. Unexplained or irregular absences will be notified to the Student Services Section, for action.
- 7.6 Applications for childcare financial support cannot be considered if the funds are fully committed. The level of these funds is set nationally and, once allocated, no further funds are available.
- 7.7 Students must not place their child/children at a childcare provider prior to receiving a letter of confirmation for financial assistance by the Finance Section. 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.

8.0 Withdrawing Financial Assistance

- 8.1 This action will, under normal circumstances, follow the procedure as detailed in Section 7.0.
- 8.2 Should a situation arise whereby the student does not attend College, and does not inform the College of his/her absence, but places their child/children at the childcare provider during these absences, it will be left to the discretion of the Director of Finance to authorise the immediate withdrawal of childcare financial support. A letter will be sent to the student informing him/her of the decision.
- 8.3 The College reserves the right to recover from the student any overpayment made.

9.0 Right of Appeal

- 9.1 A student has the right to appeal under the Students' Appeals Policy and Procedures. Any appeal should be made to the Finance Team Leader.

10.0 Review of Policy

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed each year in conjunction with the National Policy Guidelines and available cash funding.