



Special Circumstances Release Policy

1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy applies to all students who have entered into a legally binding agreement with the College Group. This includes, but is not limited to, accommodation licence agreements, transport terms and conditions, and any other contractual arrangements where there is a formal agreement between the College and the student (or their parent/guardian). It covers requests for early termination or release from such agreements prior to their natural end date where a student believes they are unable to continue due to new and exceptional circumstances.
- 1.2. All agreements entered into with the College Group are legally binding. This means that once signed, students or their parents/guardians are normally responsible for fulfilling the terms of the agreement for its full duration, including any associated financial obligations. The College Group plans its services, allocations, and budgets on the basis that students will meet these commitments. However, it is recognised that unexpected and difficult situations can arise.
- 1.3. Requests falling outside the definition of special circumstances, including general dissatisfaction, changes in personal preference, lifestyle choices, or foreseeable financial difficulty, will not normally be approved under this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, situations such as a student learning to drive or choosing alternative arrangements where no exceptional circumstance exists.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1. This policy establishes a comprehensive and consistent framework for the consideration of student requests to be released from legally binding agreements with the College Group on the basis of special circumstances. The College recognises that students may encounter serious, unforeseen events after entering into such agreements which materially affect their ability to fulfil their contractual obligations.
- 2.2. Whilst the College Group is committed to acting reasonably, compassionately, and proportionately, release from any agreement is not an automatic entitlement. All requests will be assessed on an individual basis, with careful consideration given to the evidence provided, the nature and timing of the circumstances, and the contractual, financial, and operational implications for the relevant service area.

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3. Impact Assessments

- 3.1. This policy has undergone an impact assessment process during review to ensure that any foreseeable risks and implications have been appropriately considered.
- 3.2. Equal Opportunities: The policy has been reviewed to uphold principles of equality and non-discrimination in accordance with equal opportunities legislation, ensuring fair treatment for all individuals.
- 3.3. Data Protection: All personal data processing activities governed by this policy have been assessed for risk and are fully compliant with current data protection laws. Privacy-by-design has been embedded as a core approach, with safeguards implemented to protect data subjects.
- 3.4. Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and Environmental Sustainability: Relevant aspects of safeguarding, health and safety, and environmental sustainability have been impact assessed to support a secure, inclusive, and responsible working and learning environment for all.

4. Definitions

“Special Circumstances Release” A discretionary decision made by the College to release a student, either wholly or partially, from the obligations of a legally binding agreement due to exceptional, unforeseen, and evidenced circumstances beyond the student’s control.

5. Policy

- 5.1. The College will only grant a Special Circumstances Release where a properly completed application form is submitted, together with satisfactory supporting evidence. Applicants must be logged into a College account to complete the form. All applications will be considered by an appropriate panel, normally within 14 days of receipt of a fully completed application. Special Circumstances Releases are discretionary, and the decision of the panel is final.
- 5.2. A Special Circumstances Release will normally only be granted in respect of serious, unforeseen events after entering into an agreement, which materially affect the student’s ability to fulfil their contractual obligations, on one or more of the following grounds:
 - a) Medical reasons, including limited mobility or significant health conditions, where appropriate external medical evidence is provided.
 - b) Safeguarding or mental health reasons, where the application is supported by the College’s Safeguarding team or appropriate professionals.

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- c) Exceptional financial hardship, where the student qualifies for support under the College’s bursary scheme or equivalent financial assistance arrangements, and the application is supported by the College’s Student Finance team.
- d) Significant changes in educational circumstances, including but not limited to a student securing a confirmed place at an overseas institution (for example, a college in the United States) after enrolment. Appropriate documentary evidence of the change must be provided.

5.3. A panel to consider applications for a Special Circumstances Release will consist of at least two relevant staff, and will be convened by the relevant Head of Service, depending on the nature of the agreement. This will normally be:

- the Head of Accommodation (for accommodation agreements),
- the Director of NFL (for NFL accommodation arrangements), or
- the Transport Coordinator (for transport agreements).

5.4. The panel will include a representative of the Learner Services team.

5.5. Decisions of the panel are final and there is no further right of appeal.

5.6. The decision of the panel will take effect from the date of decision, unless the panel sets an earlier or later date (the release date). A decision to release a student from their obligations will not affect payment obligations prior to the release date.

6. Location and Access

6.1. This document can be found here:

- The Loughborough College Group's Website
- The Loughborough College Group's SharePoint

7. Linked Policies and Procedures

7.1. You may wish to view the following policies:

- None

8. Change Log

Date	Version	Details of Change	Reviewer	Reviewer Title

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