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National Star College

Families and Carers Handbook 2024 / 2025

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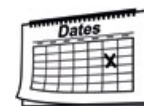
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TOTUM card (formerly NUS extra)

You can buy a TOTUM card for £14.99. This makes some things cheaper when you are shopping.



For more details ask your PLC or visit www.nus.org.uk/en/nus-extra.



Welcome

Hello!

To all Families and Carers of first-year students I want to welcome you to National Star, and specifically to National Star Ullenwood. I am confident your young person will enjoy their time with us, achieve many great things and make lots of new friends. And to those who are returning, welcome back and well done on all of the great progress you made last year.

Starting a new college, and indeed returning after such a long holiday, can be a daunting experience for the young people and likewise the Families and Carers. However, there are a lot of people here to support. During your first week you will meet many new people, including our programme managers, a personalised learning manager, day and residential managers, tutors, PLCs and PLCTs, therapists and learning support, all of whom you can go to if you have any worries or would like to ask any questions.

We want you to help us continue to make sure that National Star is a great place to learn. I look forward to meeting you all, and to seeing your young people progress, have fun and enjoying being a National Star student.

Thank you for joining National Star.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Kingsbury-Elia".

Joanne Kingsbury-Elia
Director of Learning and Support

About National Star

We are working with people with disabilities and their supporters to challenge stereotypes, raise aspirations and change attitudes.

Our vision is of a world in which people with disabilities can realise their potential as equal and active citizens in control of their lives.

National Star a snapshot

Established
• **1967** •

£46m
Charity

Three college sites in Ullenwood, Wales and Hereford

96%
of colleagues who responded to our annual colleague survey say they are proud to work at National Star

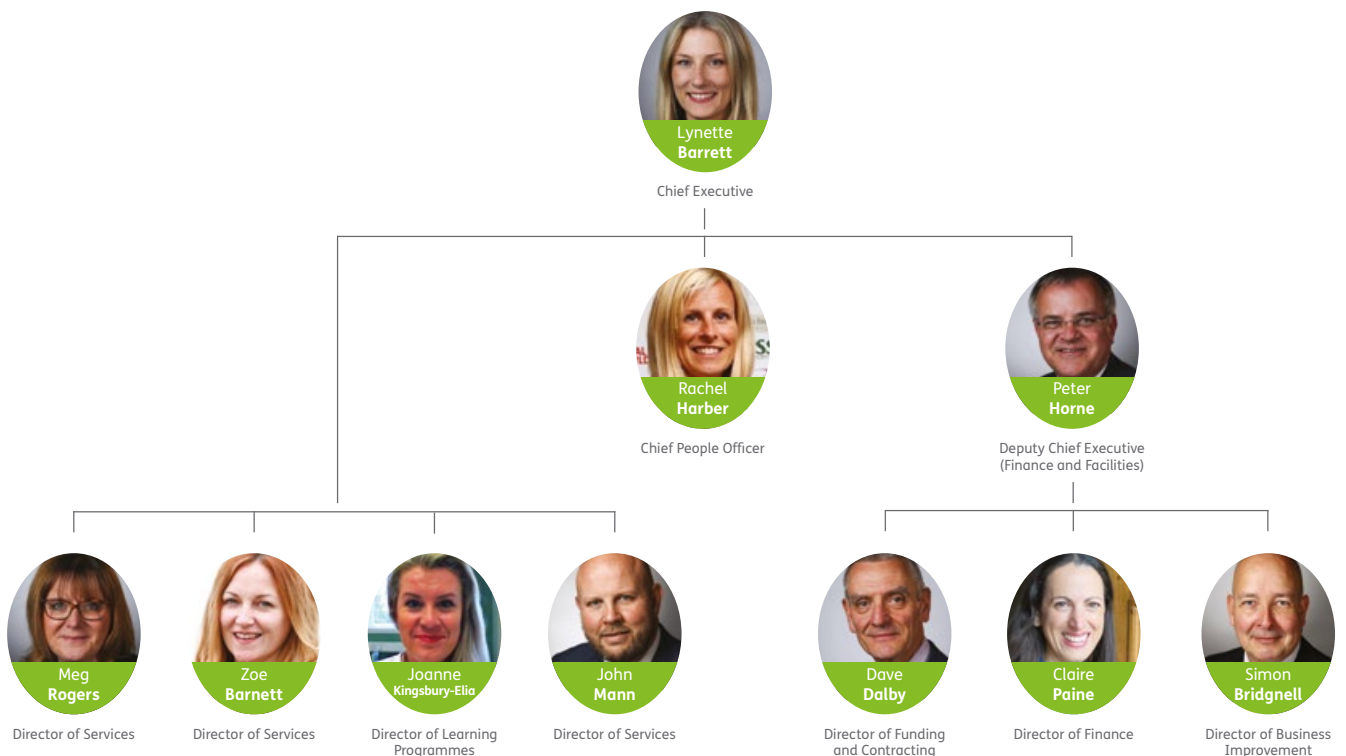
Disability Confident employer that celebrates our diverse and inclusive workforce

Long-term living accommodation for adults with disabilities in...

- Hereford
- Cheltenham
- Malvern
- Gloucester

disability confident EMPLOYER

The Leadership Team



Our mission, vision and values

Mission

To realise the aspirations of people with disabilities through learning, living and support services.

Vision

For a world in which people with disabilities are able to realise their potential as equal and active citizens in control of their own lives.

Values

COLLABORATION
- WORKING TOGETHER

We work with others to achieve more for people.

We develop strong partnerships to grow and be sustainable. We encourage everyone to be passionate and enthusiastic, sharing what they know to improve their own life and that of others.

INTEGRITY
- OPEN AND HONEST

We are open, honest, accountable, and transparent.

What we do is central to our belief that people with disabilities should be in control of their own lives.

RESPECT
- LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER

We recognise and are grateful for everyone's contribution.

We are compassionate and promote a community where everyone can feel welcome, and success is celebrated.

SUSTAINABILITY
- CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATIONAL STAR'S LONG-TERM FUTURE

We aim to reduce our environmental footprint.

We will follow a strategy of growth to secure the future of the charity and our work with people with disabilities.

AMBITION
- HAVING GOALS

We support students, colleagues and residents to be the best they can be.

We aim for excellence in everything we do. We look for ways to improve society so people with disabilities can live full and active lives.





Working together - Optimising Positive Relations for Positive Outcomes

- The organisational values are essential in how we work with you. Through collaboration, we can create a supportive and positive environment that fosters learners' success. Your involvement is appreciated and integral to the effectiveness of our young people's achievements. We are honoured to be trusted with contributing to your young person's progress and preparation for adult life.



- We want to work together to achieve the aspirations of your young person and foster positive working relationships.
- We must agree to always have professional and respectful communications and consideration for one another.
- We pride ourselves in being open and honest. When we don't always get things right, we are accountable and committed to learn from this. We value your contributions, patience and understanding whilst we work through these matters together.
- We strive to provide equal standards of service to all our young people and families. To achieve this, Senior leaders take a proactive approach in ensuring all staff workload is balanced and their wellbeing protected.

National Star Curriculum: Preparation for adult life

- **Community Inclusion:** Students learn about self-empowerment and their place and role within their communities. There is regular exploration of leisure activities and developing relationships within college and wider social networks. 
- **Employment / Meaningful Occupation:** Empower students with the necessary skills and competencies required to succeed in their chosen fields e.g. work, leisure, personal interests, positive contribution and citizenship. 
- **Good Health:** A holistic therapeutic provision will support both physical and mental health needs and develop strategies to engage in independent living skills and other meaningful activities. 
- **Independent Living Skills:** Promote personal development by enhancing independence e.g. daily routines, money skills, mobility and health needs. Students explore their strengths, interests, aspirations, and develop a positive mindset towards learning and future opportunities. 

The five pathways at National Star:

- Engaging With the World
- Personal Development for Active Citizenship
- Personal Development for Positive Contribution
- Work Outcomes and Personal Development
- Work-based Learning

Your rights and responsibilities at college

What your young person should do

Respect others



What this means to us...

- Respecting other people's opinions and values
- Not being a bully
- Understanding personal space
- Giving time for others to communicate
- Trying to be polite
- Not forcing someone to do something they don't want to do

Follow the rules



What this means to us...

- Being on time
- Keeping safe
- Not being unfair
- Looking after the college (e.g. keeping it tidy)
- Listening to staff
- Drinking responsibly
- Obeying lesson, house and college rules

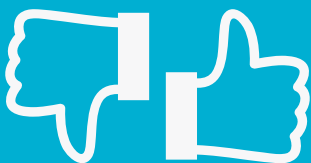
Take part



What this means to us...

- Communicating
- Telling someone if you have a problem
- Speaking up / using your communicator
- Joining in

Make choices



What this means to us...

- Telling staff what you want to achieve
- Listening
- Speaking up
- Making decisions
- Accepting help when you need it
- Choosing your portion size

Do the best you can



What this means to us...

- Working hard
- Being prepared
- Being friendly
- Looking after yourself
- Not wasting food, electricity or resources

What your young person should expect from college

To be respected



What this means to us...

- To be treated equally, but not the same
- Freedom of speech
- Not to be bullied
- To be treated as an adult
- To be able to make mistakes
- Having supportive friends
- To have privacy
- To be given time

To help make the rules



What this means to us...

- Being listened to
- Freedom of speech
- Being involved in decision making
- Feeling safe and secure
- Having safe IT systems

To be involved



What this means to us...

- Being listened to
- Being involved in what's going on
- Not being excluded
- Having things to do

To make choices



What this means to us...

- Being involved in making decisions
- Being kept informed
- Becoming more independent
- Staff giving time and being patient

To have great services



What this means to us...

- Having outstanding teaching
- Exceptional care
- Timetables or programmes that fit around the person
- Good support
- Help from staff, but only when you need it
- Having a good choice of healthy food

How you can support your young person while they are at National Star

- Take an interest in what they are learning and support / embed that learning while they are with you at home



- Adhere to National Star's values and work collaboratively with National Star's multi-disciplinary teams, treating them with respect at all times
- Adhere to our student absence policy and avoid taking your young person out of college unnecessarily
- Follow National Star's policies and procedures to ensure all students can learn safely

Keeping you Informed

National Star's mission is for people with disabilities to be equal and active citizens in control of their own lives. Studying at National Star is part of that journey towards adulthood and independence.



For students who can, we encourage them to take the lead in communicating with families, parents and carers about what they are learning and how they are getting on at college. We do appreciate that this may be a challenge for some students, and we will help them to achieve this wherever possible. For example, one student had never been able to send an email to his family until he started to learn at National Star.

Saying this, we do appreciate that as families, parents and carers you will want to communicate with us directly and to keep in touch about your young person's progress during their time at college.

The Role of the Multi-Disciplinary Team:

At National Star, we pride ourselves in offering a holistic learning programme, where our young people benefit from the skills and experiences of a breadth of professionals around them.

Whether a student is making choices of clothing, calculating the costs of a shopping list, undertaking a stretch programme or serving customers as part of work experience, a team effort contributes to success.



Within your young person's multi-disciplinary team there are several key team members who you'll be in regular contact with:

Personal Learning Co-Ordinator (Tutor):

Most students will have a Personal Learning Co-Ordinator (PLC) or Personal Learning Co-Ordinator Tutor (PLCT).

They will be your key point of contact for matters relating to their learning, timetable (including therapy) and progress.

The PLC(T) will contact you regularly with updates on their learning and oversee termly progress reports. They will organise review meetings and will co-ordinate plans with the Transition Support Team, for your young person's eventual transition from National Star.



Residential / Day Service Manager:

The manager is responsible for providing high quality, individualised care. They will ensure there are skilled and appropriate staffing levels to meet the diverse needs of the young people in their care.

Working within the residential team, are a team of nurses who oversee clinical health and support the staffing in daily health management.



Learning support staff :

Our aim is for students to become as independent as possible so that they can direct their own care and do things for themselves when they leave college.

As a result, we may suggest your young person do more things for themselves. This may be difficult to begin with.



Your young person's learning support staff will have regular contact with you, keeping you informed and finding things out when necessary (only with the student's permission).

The Therapy Teams:

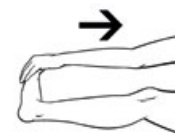
At National Star, we are dedicated to providing a comprehensive and specialised therapy service that supports the unique needs of our learners. Our team of highly skilled therapists works collaboratively with the learning programmes to create an inclusive and supportive environment, striving for each student to reach their full potential.

The therapy your young person receives will be based on assessed needs prior to their time at college.

Therapy Specialities:

- Speech and Language Therapy including dysphagia management, bespoke language programmes, social communication group therapy, AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) technical support / troubleshooting and specific approaches such as intensive interaction and Makaton.





- Occupational Therapy include development of independency including personal care, wheelchair mobility, meal preparation and accessing the community training (ACT). We also provide specialist programmes in sensory integration and 24-hour posture management including assessment of specialist equipment.
- Physiotherapy including aquatic therapy, rebound therapy, a fitness suite and various land-based therapy.
- Emotional Wellbeing services including behavioural support, talking therapy, drama therapy, music therapy, dance and movement psychotherapy and psychology input.



What you can expect from the therapy department:

Learner centred approach:

- Every person is different with different needs. Therefore, we are guided by the education, health and care plans to provide a person-centred approach to meet their specific needs and goals.

Timely assessments and reviews:

- We will conduct initial pre-assessments prior to each learner commencing with us at National Star and provide details of what therapy needs they are likely to require. Once their place is confirmed, we will arrange to conduct a thorough initial assessment when they arrive to understand each student's abilities and challenges. These assessments will guide the creation of individualised therapy plans. Regular reviews and adjustments will ensure that therapy remains effective and responsive to any changes in the student's needs.



An integrated approach:

- Our therapists collaborate with educators and other staff to integrate therapy goals into the classroom and daily activities where appropriate.



This holistic approach ensures that therapeutic interventions are consistent and supportive across all learning, residential and therapeutic environments.

Support with shared decision making:

- We believe that prioritising our learners needs and involving family in therapeutic care is important to the success of our therapy programmes. You will be updated on your young person's progress at appropriate intervals determined by the named therapists. We may also provide resources and training to help you support your young person's development at home where indicated.



Group Therapy and Social Skills Development:

- In addition to individual therapy sessions, we also integrate group therapy and social skills development programs to optimise the therapy experience. These sessions help students practice communication, social interaction, and motor skills in a supportive group setting.



A Focus on Well-Being:

- Our emotional well-being service is a core component of our therapy provision. Our therapists work on building resilience, coping strategies, and emotional regulation skills to ensure students feel supported both academically and personally.



Transition Support:

- An important aspect of our therapy provision is preparing students for a life after college from day 1 with National Star. Over the time they are with us, students will be supported with preparing to transition out of college and into the community. As they become more equipped with strategies to support them beyond college walls, we will also provide reports and connect with community services to ensure a smooth and successful transition from college therapy to any input they may receive within the public / private sector.



What our therapists expect of you as parents / carers:

- We have a belief that a strong partnership between the college and parents is essential to the success of our learners. Your involvement and support play a crucial role in your young person's time at college.

Communication:

- Our therapists will always try their best to be available to you when you have queries. Nevertheless, as they are occupied striving to provide quality care for our learners, they may not always be readily available. Therefore, we recommend that any communications or queries you have, are made via your young person's PLC(T), who will support you in arranging any meetings or specific communications with the therapy team.



Consistency of message:

- Support the therapy goals and strategies implemented at college by providing a conducive environment and reinforcing them at home. Consistency between home and National Star is vital for your young person's progress.
- Through collaboration, we can create a supportive environment that fosters growth and success for your young person. Your involvement is appreciated and integral to the effectiveness of our therapy programmes.



Families and Carers' Forum

We'd encourage you to join our Families and Carers' Forum, which meets virtually every six weeks to discuss topics of common interest to National Star families and carers.



Topics discussed at recent Forums include nutrition and hydration, transition after college and options for long-term living. In addition, the Forum, hosted on Zoom, gives parents the chance to meet informally and get to know each other better. This is particularly helpful for parents or carers who wish to arrange day trips out or get-togethers for students during college holidays.

Families and carers of a student at National Star will be automatically invited to future meetings – we hope you will choose to join us.

Dates for the next academic year can be found in the Families and Carers Zone of the National Star website

[Families and Carers Zone | Sharing knowledge | National Star](#)

You may also wish to join the private Facebook group

[National Star 'Life after College' Parent and Carers Network](#)

This group is the perfect space to share and receive information with other National Star parents and carers supporting their young people for life after college.

Stay up to date on social media

Discover the latest news and student stories from National Star by following us on social media.



X

www.x.com/thenationalstar



Facebook

www.facebook.com/nationalstar

www.facebook.com/groups/nscalumni



Instagram

www.instagram.com/thenationalstar



LinkedIn

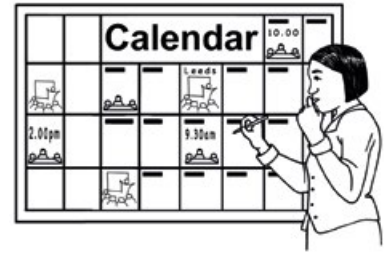
www.linkedin.com/company/national-star



YouTube

www.youtube.com/natstarcollege

Reports and reviews



Your young person will have a review of their first half-term at college. They will then have another review at the end of their first year and one review per year after that.

Progress reports and review meetings

Your young person's PLC / PLCT will gather information from the student, their course tutor, learning support staff, therapists and others to write a report which will be talked about in the progress review meeting.



For many students this will also be a review of their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) / Learning Skills Plan (LSP) or Individual Development Plan (IDP).



At the review we will talk to you and your young person about what is going well and how they can learn things to help them in the future.



In each review we will also talk about plans for where your young person would like to live and what they'd like to do when they leave National Star.



You, your young person, their PLC / PLCT and learning support staff will attend all reviews. Other college staff, such as therapists, may attend if it is relevant. Other professionals who are interested in what your young person is doing, such as a social worker, health professional, external careers advisor, may also attend.

We will make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak and that we talk about everything that needs to be covered in the meeting.

Compliments and complaints

Compliments

It is lovely for us to know when we have got it right! If you want to give us a compliment, please email compliments@nationalstar.org or leave us a google review! And if given the chance be sure to share the feedback directly with the individual or team.



Complaints

If things aren't right, we need you to tell us so we can try to make things better. In the first instance, please inform the Manager of the team where there is a concern. Most of the time you just need to tell us, and you won't need to make a formal complaint.



If you do not feel that your concern has been fully addressed, please speak to the relevant Head of Department, advising of your complaint and the steps that have been taken so far which have not met your expectations. The Head of Department will follow the internal process for managing complaints.



The CEO is notified of all complaints received and will acknowledge this in writing. It will then be managed by an allocated person from either the operation team or Senior Leadership team.

Very rarely, we may still have not got it right. If this is the case, you can contact someone outside National Star. This could be:



- **Ofsted** for concerns about education and learning (telephone 0300 123 4234).
- **The Care Quality Commission (CQC)** for care concerns (telephone 03000 616161).

Student Involvement at National Star

We actively encourage students to engage with the running of the charity and to contribute to wider, national discussions around specialist education.



Your young person will have the opportunity to stand for election as a student governor or Student Union Executive member, become a Natspec Student Voice Parliament Representative or join the College Advisory Board.

There are also other student groups providing feedback on a range of issues including sustainability, learning pathways and residence.

Keeping your young person safe at National Star

We want your young person to feel happy and safe while they are in our care and that's why we take safeguarding extremely seriously at National Star.



We do not tolerate bullying and harassment of any kind and will ensure that your young person has the confidence to report any bullying, harassment or safeguarding concerns to us.



We have a robust approach to equity, diversity and inclusion and will not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

Familiarise yourself with our [English and Welsh safeguarding policy](#)

If you have any safeguarding concerns please speak to a member of our team who you trust in the first instance. Or you can speak directly to our safeguarding team on **01242 339997** or by emailing safeguarding@nationalstar.org.

Acceptable use of social media

Lots of students at National Star use social media to share news and keep in touch with family and friends.



Here are a few dos and don'ts which we ask families and carers to discuss with their young people around social media use where appropriate:

Student social media accounts are their platforms, so we encourage them to keep images that they post to ones of themselves, where possible.



If a student wants to post a picture of someone else, especially a fellow student or staff member, they should always check for permission first.



They should always give another person the opportunity to check the photo, even if they give consent for their image to be used.



Don't use the full names of fellow students or staff in any social media posts.



Don't share confidential information about students or staff.



Respect people's privacy – another student's social media account may be private for a reason.



If your young person thinks a post may be inappropriate, they should not post it.



National Star also requests for students to complete a [photo consent form](#) for marketing purposes. Please return all completed forms to assessments@nationalstar.org

Food and financial matters

College essentials!

Food

Nutrition and hydration for students with disabilities is a complex issue which requires a personalised approach.



We understand that food is not only nutrition. Mealtimes are a social occasion, a time for enjoyment and a pastime, especially for those who cannot access many hobbies. Food can also be a comfort to those eating and a display of care from those preparing.

We can do tasters to encourage students to try new foods and different textures.



Most residential students will eat their breakfast in their residence, enjoy lunch in the **StarCafé** and have an evening meal in either their residence or **StarCafé**. Wherever possible, students are encouraged to practice their food preparation skills in Life Skills sessions as part of their education timetable.

Residential students can be supported to shop and make some of their own food to promote independence.



We have looked at the nutritional value and textures of all meals and fluids offered on the menu. Menus change weekly, on a four-week rolling programme.

Our team encourage students to make healthy choices and drink plenty of fluids.



We appreciate that you know your young person better than anyone and have become experts in their nutritional needs. If you are concerned that your young person is not getting an ideal diet, talk to your PLC / PLCT.



They can work with the excellent nursing and catering teams to monitor your young person's diet, BMI and general health. We also encourage students to share their feedback on the menu changes and the quality of the food etc. We then respond to feedback and make appropriate changes.

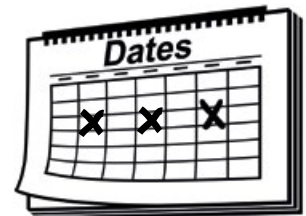


Money

We prefer residential students to bring a pre-paid card in September. This can then be easily topped-up from home when required. Please see page 29 for more information.



Many day students bring their own debit card for contactless payments, or a small amount of cash to pay for snacks and other items. In Life Skills sessions students often can visit local shops and cafes to practice their numeracy and money recognition skills.



Financial support for costs not covered by funding

We may be able to help with some additional costs that your young person may not be able to afford through a discretionary bursary.



The request has to be for things that will help with their learning, such as equipment, the cost of trips, activities and transport, where they are not covered by statutory funding. If you request a larger bursary, normally over £150 a year, we will need information about your financial situation so we can be sure we share the money we have fairly. We will explain this more if you make an application.

If your young person is living in England and are aged between 16 and 18, depending on your circumstances you may be able to get money from the Government from their vulnerable person bursary. More information is available at:

www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

If your young person is living in Wales you may be able to receive money from the Welsh Government from the Education Maintenance Allowance or Welsh Government Learning Grant schemes, depending on the student's age and financial circumstances. More information is available at:

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/fe.aspx

You can talk to your young person's PLC / PLCT or the Bursary team at any time during the year. If you need more information please contact us on telephone number **01242 527631** or email bursary@nationalstar.org.

Pre-paid cards and benefits

Read on for information about pre-paid cards, spending money and benefits when your young person starts college in September. Please get in touch if you have any further questions.



Pre-paid cards

- It is preferred that you bring a pre-paid card for your young person in September. This can then be easily topped up by yourself from home when required.
- There is not a suggested amount to keep on the card.
- If you need to bring cash for any reason, please be advised that we are only able to keep up to £50 in cash per person at any given time.
- For more information about pre-paid cards with suggested places to get them visit: **www.moneysavingexpert.com/credit-cards/prepaid-cards**

Security and safeguards for pre-paid cards at college

- Pre-paid cards will be held in individually named wallets in the student's safe. The PIN will be held securely elsewhere by the authorised handlers.
- In order for audits to take place, the authorised handlers must be aware of when and how much money has been loaded onto the card. A maximum amount of £75 is recommended, unless agreed otherwise by management. This will be logged onto the student's Finance Log.
- The Finance Log will be completed and audited in the same way as cash transactions. The leadership team will be immediately made aware of any discrepancies so they can investigate. Authorised handlers may request access to statements of transactions made using the card (from the student's parents or financial appointees), to aid the auditing process.
- The card will be signed out in the same way as cash, and PINs shared discreetly.
- Responsibility for the safekeeping of the card, including the PIN, lies with the staff member who is supporting the student while out and about. They are also responsible for returning the card, along with any receipts, to an authorised person. As with cash, in the absence of an authorised person, the card and receipts must be placed in the post box with the required information.

Benefits

For information about what will happen to your young person's benefits, please contact the Department for Work and Pensions. Advise them that they will be going to residential college and for how many weeks a year. They will then be able to help you further.

Bringing personal possessions into college

Personal possessions brought from home, especially electronic equipment such as mobile phones and tablets, need to be insured. Please check that your home insurance policy will cover these items for your young person or take out a separate policy.

It is helpful to have items clearly labelled with your young person's name in the event that they are misplaced during their time at National Star.

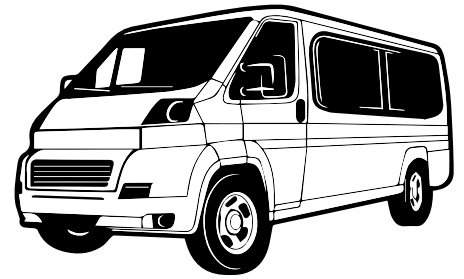
We recommend you work with your young person to complete an inventory list of all items you bring to college, identifying the serial numbers of electronic equipment.



SG18 0DH

Transport matters

If your young person is a day student at National Star in Ullenwood, Hereford or Wales, and transport is provided by a third-party organisation, it is your responsibility to ensure that the driver and transport provider is adequately vetted, trained and insured to transport your young person to college.



Student owned vehicles

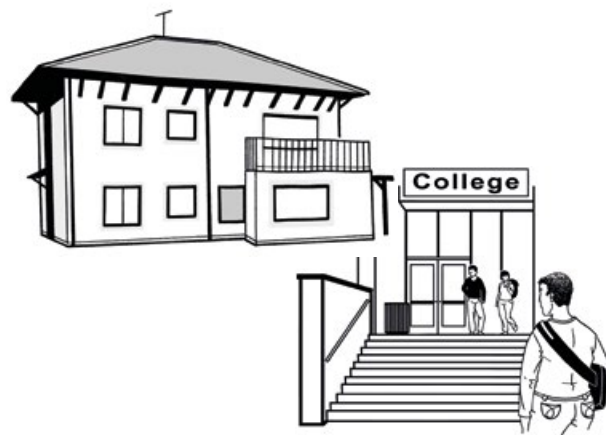
Increasing numbers of residential students are bringing their own vehicles to college.

If you wish for one of our staff team to drive your young person's vehicle while they are at college, we require the completion of a Service User Vehicle Agreement together with the supporting documentation, including information relating to insurance arrangements, vehicle recovery arrangements, servicing, MOT and road tax. The exact documents will be agreed up on completion of the Service User Vehicle Agreement.

As with any other vehicle on National Star property, we expect a student vehicle to be parked considerately and do not accept responsibility for any loss or damage to the vehicle while it is parked on our premises.

Visitor guidelines

We welcome visitors to college. A residential student's family, friends or representatives may visit whenever they choose. However, visits are generally discouraged during lecture times and after 10pm.



It helps us to know if you, or someone else, is planning to visit.

To comply with our strict safeguarding policy, all visitors must sign in. This will usually be at reception, but when that is closed visitors can do so in one of the residences. Friends and family will be given a black lanyard.

Other visitors that we don't know well will be given a red lanyard. This means that someone from college must accompany them at all times.

Visitors usually cannot stay overnight, unless they book one of our glamping pods at **StarGlamping**.

www.nationalstar.org/visit-us/starglamping

Moving on

Information, advice and guidance

Transition (or moving on) is at the heart of your young person's programme at National Star. We will start talking about this with your young person as soon as they begin at college. This can include where, and with whom they 'want to live and what they want to do', including activities and employment.



Our transition guide will be shared with you at the start of the academic year.



Please ask your PLC / PLCT for a digital copy if you are not issued with one.



Term dates 2024 / 2025

Autumn term 2024

New student enrolment: Tuesday 3 September

Returning residential students: Wednesday 4 September

ALL students on full timetable: Thursday 5 September

Half-term

Travel day*: Saturday 26 October

Residential students return: Sunday 3 November

Term starts / returning day students: Monday 4 November

Term ends

Travel day:** Saturday 21 December

Spring term 2025

Residential students return: Monday 6 January

Term starts / returning day students: Tuesday 7 January

Half-term

Travel day*: Saturday 15 February

Residential students return: Sunday 23 February

Term starts / returning day students: Monday 24 February

Term ends

Travel day:** Saturday 12 April

Summer term 2025

Residential students return: Sunday 27 April

Term starts / returning day students: Monday 28 April

May Bank Holiday: Monday 5 May (no timetabled classes, no day students)

Half-term

Travel day*: Saturday 24 May

Residential students return: Sunday 1 June

Term starts / returning day students: Monday 2 June

Term ends

Travel day:** Saturday 19 July

*here will be scheduled activities for day students ONLY. Day students will arrive and leave at their usual times; residential students should leave by 1pm

**Residential students should leave by 1pm. Day students are not due in on the term end travel days

Student absence and end of term / half-term travel arrangements

Student absence

For students to make the most of their time at National Star we expect them to have full attendance at college. However, we do understand, that due to illness or exceptional circumstances, parents or carers may need to request time away from college for their son or daughter.

Authorised absences from college include medical appointments and admissions, illness, occasional weekend leave and significant special occasions, such as a family wedding (a holiday is not considered a reason for an authorised absence). Requests for authorised absences will be considered on an individual basis, considering previous absence and the reason for the request.

Student absence from college requires at least three days' advance notice (except in emergency situations), which must be approved. Parents and carers are now expected to make requests for exceptional leave via an online form on the National Star website at [Student exceptional leave | National Star | Learn with us](#)

Parents and carers have been advised to contact their personal learning coordinator (PLC) if they need help completing the form. Colleagues should refer parents and carers to the online form for all exceptional leave requests going forward.

Funding and absences

Funding for term time residential students includes the cost of staying at college at the weekends. National Star College is obliged to log and inform funding authorities of all absences.

Your funding authority realises that some absence from college may be unavoidable (such as a hospital admission). However, regular or repeated absences may affect your funding and could affect your placement.

Exceptional circumstances

We recognise that there may be other instances when an absence from college might be unavoidable. Please discuss and negotiate this with your PLC. These absences must be approved.

Travel arrangements for the start and finish of holidays

Term ends / travel day

- This is the last day of term / half-term. There will be scheduled activities for **ALL** students.
- Day students will attend college on travel day. They will arrive and leave at their usual times.
- Residential students should leave by 1pm.

Travel return day

This is for residential students and is most often a Sunday – but do please check the term dates. We ask that students return between 2pm and 9pm.

Terms starts

This is the first day on which timetable classes are held. Day students return on this day.

Medicines reminder

Please ensure that medicines are collected **in person** from a nurse or designated person in your accommodation / base area when you leave and are taken back there on your return. These need to be counted and signed for when taking home from college and upon return.

National Star College enrolment pack 2024 – 2025

Your new student enrolment pack is included in this section of your handbook. Please bring checked and completed forms with you to enrolment.

Medical matters: Residential students

The health and wellbeing of National Star College students is most important to us. Your support needs are individual to you, and below you will find some guidance that will help our team of nurses give you the best possible support.



Seeing a doctor at National Star

Residential students will be registered with a local GP practice. Once you are registered, you will be able to access a range of services and support.

Medication and medical supplies

- On enrolment day please bring with you a **four-week supply** of medicines, wound / pressure dressings, food thickeners, nutritional supplements, feeds and all other important equipment.
- All personal medication should be clearly labelled with your name and the dosage / instructions. It must also be in the original packaging or in pharmacy-dispensed Dosette or Venalink packaging. **Loose tablets or medication decanted into alternative containers will not be accepted.**
- **Please make sure that the dose on medicine packets / bottles matches the dose on the prescriptions.**
- Please bring the **RIGHT SIDE of any prescriptions** you currently have **AND a medical summary** (available from your GP surgery).
- **If you are over 19 years of age, you must bring your prescription exemption card** to save you from paying prescription charges.
- Please let us know if your medication has recently changed or is soon to change.
- Please bring instructions for any specialist equipment that you use.

Collection and return of medicines

- At holidays or other periods of absence, please collect your medicines from a college nurse or designated person before you leave. Medication will be checked and the amount noted; you will be asked to countersign.
- When you go on holiday at the end of the college year (July), we will give you a full supply of medication to take home for the remainder of the academic year. **If you become unwell during the holiday, you should temporarily register with a GP in your home area.**

Other equipment

Continence products

In September please bring a six-week supply of pads. Gloucestershire Health Authority will then supply pads during term time.

Gastrostomy

Please bring all of your gastrostomy equipment with you – such as pump, giving sets, feed, spares and printed instructions – with a four-week supply of all gastrostomy feed and giving sets. Once you are registered with a GP we will arrange for a dietician to visit and they will establish a supply of feed and equipment.

Pressure relieving mattress

If you use a pressure relieving mattress, please bring it. Once registered with a local GP you will be referred to a service to supply one, but you will need yours at first.

Sleep system

If you have a bespoke sleep system, please bring it with you when you come to college.

Other services

Podiatry services

Podiatry services are available half-termly following referral by your nursing team. Please remember to bring your own nail clippers and / or scissors and files.

Dentist and optician check-ups

Routine dental and eye appointments and treatments should be arranged in your home area. We will support you to access emergency treatment if needed.

Orthotics, splinting and wheelchairs

All orthotic and splinting referrals and appointments should continue in your home area.

Contacting the Nursing team

Get in touch with the Nursing team by contacting staff in your residence. Telephone 01242 527631.

A more detailed version of this document is available for you and your parents / carers.

Frequently asked questions for students and parents / carers

1. When should I arrive?

A letter detailing your arrival time will be included with your information pack. We are enrolling 50+ new students and our returning students over the course of a week, so to allow us as much time as possible with each student and their family / carers, we have to allocate arrival dates and times. We hope that we have given you a slot which allows you time to travel, time to be here and time for your parents or carers to travel home again.



If you experience lengthy delays on your journey, please let us know if possible. Contact telephone numbers are listed later in this document.

2. What do I need to bring?

If you are a residential student, the short answer is: if you use it or need it, please bring it! Please see our ‘What should I bring with me?’ document. This is a useful guide to what you will need to bring.

If you are a day student, please read the ‘Day student information guide’ for details of what you will need.

3. We’ve filled in so many forms and spoken with lots of staff already. Why do we have to see staff again on enrolment day?

For some students, a lot can change in just a few weeks. For others, there may not have been any changes in over a year. However, we do need to know what, if anything, has changed since we last saw you. For example:

- Have there been any changes to doctors / consultants? Are your therapists still the same ones listed on the forms?
- Do you require any different medication or has the prescribed dosage changed?
- Have you had any recent operations or procedures carried out which have altered your care requirements or do you have any scheduled in the near future?

- Have any of your therapy programmes changed or has any of your therapy / communication equipment changed?
- Do you have a new wheelchair or new seating system?
- Are there any changes to your classroom support needs or have you achieved any further qualifications?
- Has there been a change to your personal care needs or equipment?
- Have you moved from Children’s Services to Adult Services, or changed your social worker?

These are only prompts as to the kind of information we’d like to have updated.

4. How can we contact the college?

Year-round

For accommodation areas, please use direct dial numbers whenever possible.

Term time

The switchboard at our main college campus in Ullenwood is staffed Monday to Friday at 8am to 5pm and Saturday and Sunday at 10am to 4pm. It is not staffed during Bank holidays.

Non term time

The switchboard at our main college campus in Ullenwood is staffed Monday to Friday at 8am to 4pm and Saturday to Sunday at 10am to 4pm. It is not staffed during Bank holidays.

Ullenwood accommodation areas

All of Ullenwood’s accommodation areas have direct dial numbers (see page 49). There are two duty manager mobile phone numbers (upper campus and lower campus), as well as the mobile numbers of the Nursing team.

Off-site accommodation

Bradbury Gardens in Cheltenham has direct dial numbers.

Main site switchboard and accommodation

Ullenwood reception switchboard

Direct dial: 01242 527631

Lake House

Deputy: Frances Carr

Lake House direct dial: 01242 504235

Manor Barn

Manager: Sam Wilcockson

Manor Barn direct dial: 01242 504203

Ullenwood View

Manager: Karen Sanderson

Ullenwood View direct dial: 01242 339985

Cotswold Sky

Manager: Becky Southgate

Cotswold direct dial: 01242 804250

Cotswold Star

Manager: Cara Glover

Cotswold direct dial: 01242 804260

Bradbury House

Manager: Josh Wheeler

Bradbury House direct dial: 01242 504291

Scott House

Manager: Josh Wheeler

Scott House direct dial: 01242 504290

Malvern

Manager: Sam Ashenhurst

Malvern direct dial: 01242 504301

Cleeve

Manager: Teresa Wootton-Lee

Cleeve direct dial: 01242 504219

Shortwood

Manager: Claire Tambling

Shortwood direct dial: 01242 504305

Day students

Managers: Michelle Hargreaves and
Ceri anne Grinter

Residential Duty Manager mobile – Ullenwood

**Upper campus (Lake House, Ullenwood
View, Bradbury House and Scott House):**
07814 809861

**Lower campus (Cotswold, Malvern, Cleeve
and Shortwood):** 07522 550376

Medical Centre direct dial: 01242 534911

Please see the 'Medical matters' document for
further contact details.

Off-site accommodation

Bradbury Gardens

Sumner Wilson Manager: Oksana Gavula

Direct dial: 01242 204384

Christie and Challen Manager: Oksana Gavula

Direct dial: 01242 504375 (touch button service available for connecting to individual buildings)

Key contacts

Joanne Kingsbury-Elia – Director of Learning and Support
jkingsbury-elia@nationalstar.org

Zoe Barnett – Director of Services and Registered Manager
zbarnett@nationalstar.org

Megan Rogers – Director of Services
mrogers@nationalstar.org

John Mann – Director of Services
jmann@nationalstar.org

Aubrey Nkata – Head of Therapies
ankata@nationalstar.org

Dave Hansell – Head of Learning and Support
dhansell@nationalstar.org

Kirby Shepherd – Head of Deployment and Support
kshepherd@nationalstar.org

Joanne Waite – Head of Learning and Support
jwaite@nationalstar.org

Jayne Hashmat – Head of Learning and Support
jhashmat@nationalstar.org

Adam Pearce – Head of Health Care and Support
apearce@nationalstar.org

Claire Townshend – Head of Health Care and Support
ctownshend@nationalstar.org

Hayley Allard - Head of Health Care and Support
hallard@nationalstar.org

Jo Middleton – Head of Social Enterprise
jmiddleton@nationalstar.org

Visiting National Star, Ullenwood

If we can help when you are making your travel plans, please get in touch.



National Star

Realising the aspirations of people with disabilities

By train and taxi

Cheltenham and Gloucester railway stations are both about 15 minutes away from Ullenwood, and there are generally taxis available.

By road

Via the M4, M5 or other roads, shown below.

Entrance and parking

The site entrance is on Ullenwood Manor Road, off Leckhampton Hill.

Once on site, follow signs for **Visitors and Disabled parking**. Park and follow signs at the rear of the car park for **Reception**.

Use this entrance for

- National Star College (NSC)
- StarBistro
- StarTheatre
- StarTraining and LiftTraining
- StarGlamping

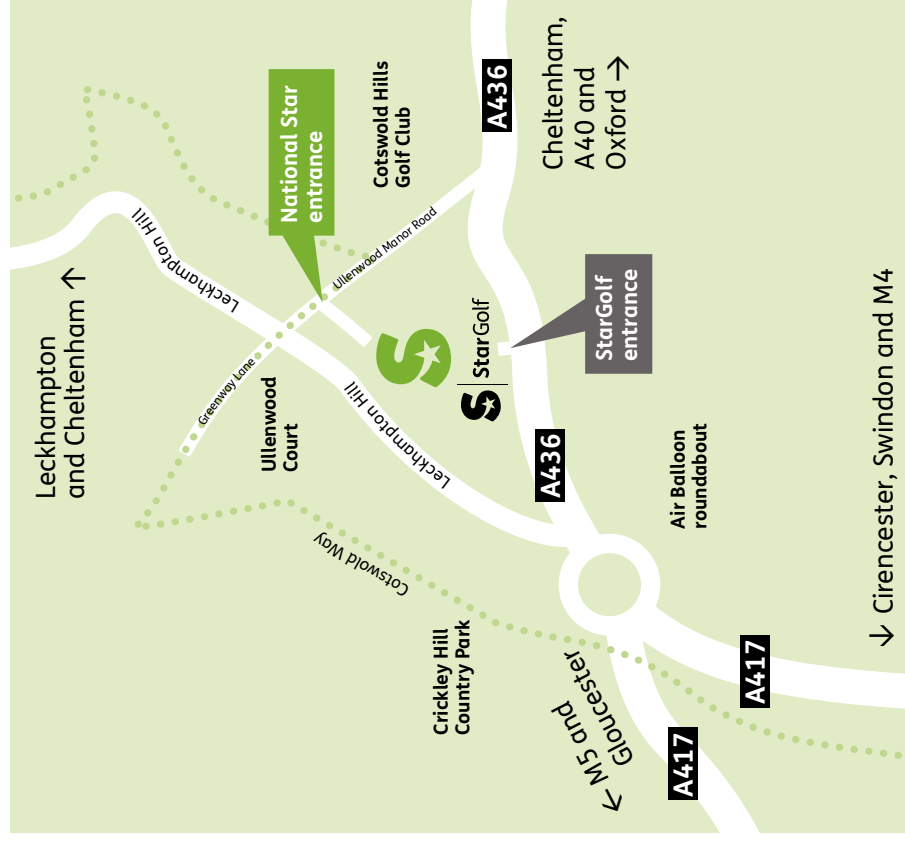
Please note StarGolf entrance is on the A436 – see map below.

Our postal address

National Star
Ullenwood
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 9QU

Email enquiries@nationalstar.org
Tel 01242 527631

www.nationalstar.org



Visiting National Star, Bradbury Gardens

If we can help when you are making your travel plans, please get in touch.



National Star

Realising the aspirations
of people with disabilities

By train and taxi

Cheltenham railway station is approximately 15 minutes from Bradbury Gardens, and there are generally taxis available at the station.

By road

Via M5 Junction 11, shown below.

Entrance and parking

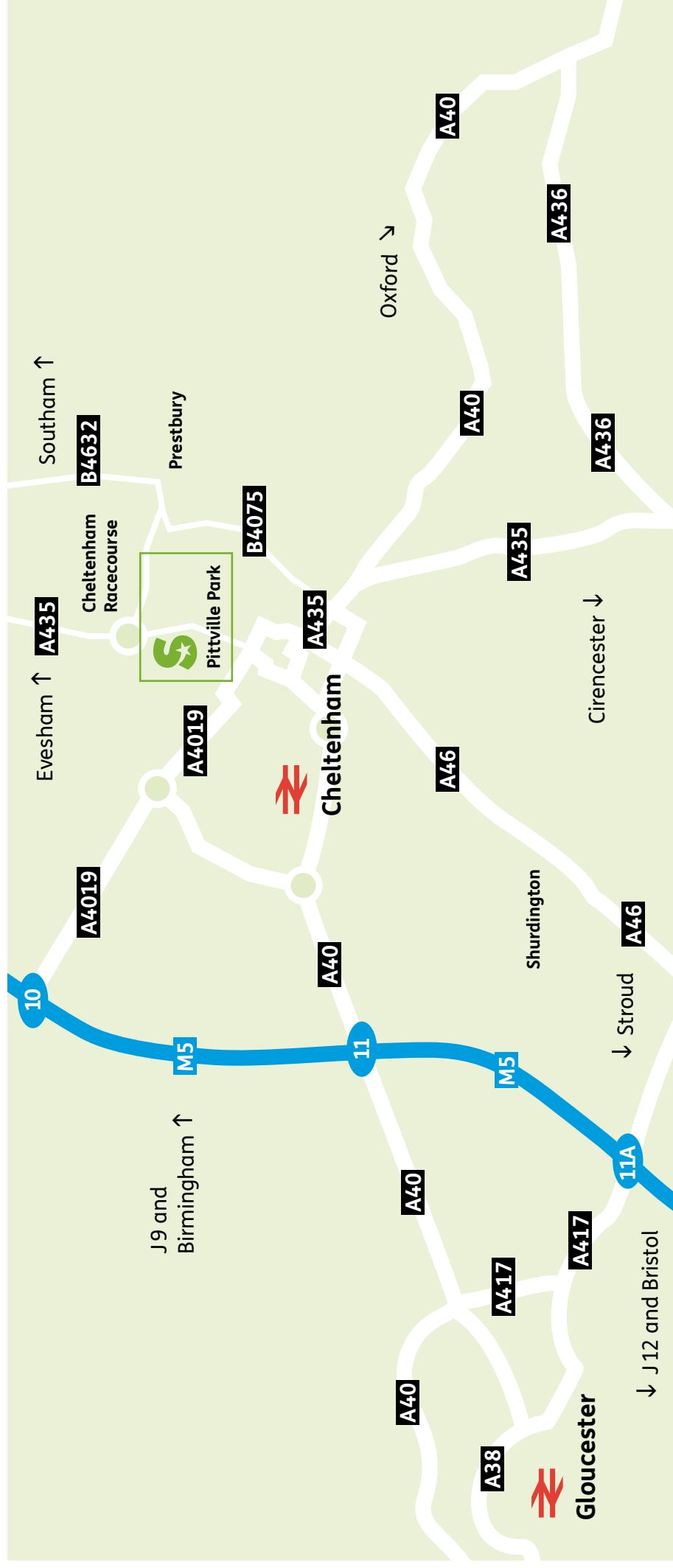
Parking is limited at Bradbury Gardens. However, there are spaces on the public road which vary from one-hour stays to two-hour stays. The visitor's entrance is located through the gates and past the car park spaces. It is on the right of the main entrance.

Our postal address

National Star
Bradbury Gardens
West Drive
Pittville
Cheltenham
GL50 4LY

Email enquiries@nationalstar.org
Tel 01242 504375 / 01242 504384

www.nationalstar.org



Insurance of personal possessions

We strongly recommend that personal possessions brought to college are insured against loss or damage. We also recommend that students make sure that privately owned items such as wheelchairs, mobility equipment, communication aids and other bespoke equipment are appropriately insured to cover major repairs and replacement. To this end, every student is requested to sign this declaration prior to coming to the college.

There are many insurance companies that are willing to offer cover for equipment being brought to college. Sometimes the insurance company providing your home insurance will be willing to extend the cover to include these items. You will need to check this with your own insurance company.



Declaration

- I confirm that all personal possessions being brought to college (such as clothing, books, games consoles, televisions, MP3 players and mobile phones) are done so entirely at my own risk, as well as privately owned personal care equipment, communication devices, wheelchairs and mobility equipment.
- All electrical items being brought onto college premises are in safe working order.
- **I understand** that I should have adequate insurance to cover my personal possessions whilst at college.
- **I confirm** that I have adequate provision for insurance purposes to cover my personal possessions.

Signature: _____ **Student / Parent / Carer**

Date: _____



Concessionary television licence 2024 – 2027

To watch or record television programmes as they're being shown on TV using devices such as a television, computer, mobile phone, games console, digital box or DVD / VHS recorder, you are required to have a television licence. As a student at National Star, you can purchase a concessionary licence, which costs £7.50 instead of the usual £159 per year.



I **DO / DO NOT** (please delete as necessary) intend to have a device in my own room at National Star on which I could watch live or recorded TV or online TV services, or stream TV programmes online, such as a television, computer, mobile phone, tablet, games console or DVD / VHS recorder.

I understand that I need a concessionary television licence whilst using my own equipment at National Star and a £7.50 charge is levied by TV Licensing. National Star will purchase this licence on my behalf. In order to avoid any delay in processing, please make a payment of £7.50 via bank transfer to National Star's account, as detailed below. If you wish to pay by card, please email your name and contact details to cashdesk@nationalstar.org and we will telephone you for payment. This payment will need to be made each September for each year you are at college.

Account name: National Star Foundation

Sort code: 40-17-53

Account number: 21299549

Reference: (Please put the student's name and reference)

Student name: _____ **Age:** _____

Signed: _____ **Student / Parent / Carer**

Building name / room no: _____

(This must be completed)

Date: _____

For information:

1. Upon receipt of £7.50 National Star will purchase on behalf of each student a concessionary television licence which is granted for a 12-month period. Our licensed 12-month period commences in September of each academic year, therefore we are obliged to inform you of the following information passed to National Star from TV Licensing – 'any student who joins the college mid-term will, unfortunately, legally have to purchase the remainder of the licensed 12-month period and, again, in September of a new academic year.'
2. A considerable amount of time is involved in preparing for a television licence application due to the number of students involved. Therefore, we would be most grateful if the fee could be paid when completing this form.
3. Please return your completed application form to cashdesk@nationalstar.org for processing even if you are not going to bring a device on which to watch television or TV services online.

For National Star admin use	
Bank transfer / card payment received	<input type="checkbox"/>
By:	Date:



Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

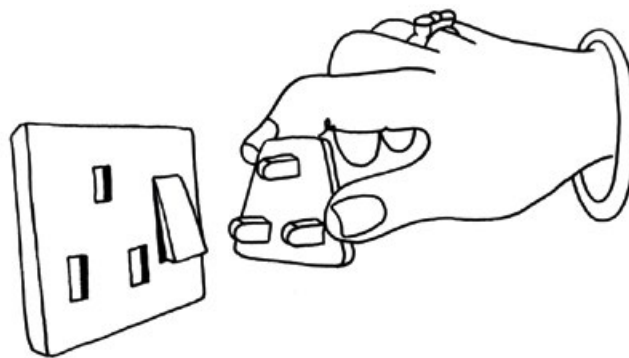
The Electricity at Work Regulations mean that the college must make sure its electricity services, associated equipment and equipment brought into National Star meet certain standards.

The main effect of this for students is that **each and every item of electrical equipment** (over one year old) brought by them to the college must be **Portable Appliance Tested (PAT)** by a competent person and accompanied with an attached label showing a test date within the last 12 months. This includes electrically operated or charged medical devices, such as gastrostomy pumps, communication aids and chargers and wheelchair chargers.

Extension leads are acceptable if tested but should have a surge protection device built in. **Two or three-way adaptors are not permitted and must not be used.**

If in doubt, you should seek the advice of an approved electrician, who will test your equipment and provide an appropriate dated certificate.

Please use the form below to list all electrical items the student is bringing to college and to certify that each is in good working order; additional space is available overleaf. Please sign and date the form overleaf when complete.



Student name:	
List of equipment:	Date last checked:



Use of privately owned devices on the National Star College computer network

To be completed and returned by all new students, even if you don't plan to bring a device with you.



Can I connect my own device to the college network (such as a laptop, smartphone or communicator)?

Yes. Wireless access is provided in residences but we cannot guarantee coverage in every bedroom. Students can also access college computers outside of lecture times – such as during breaks, in the evenings and at weekends. National Star College aims to provide students with safe access to digital media, the skills and knowledge to protect themselves in the digital world and the support to deal with any issues that may arise.

Will the IT team at college need to see my device to connect it?

Yes, we will. Our IT staff work very hard to ensure that the college network is kept free from viruses and security threats which could damage our computer network. In the first few days at college staff will help you to meet the IT team and get your device connected.

The following are not allowed:

- X** The use of file sharing applications such as LimeWire, FrostWire, Vuze, eDonkey, eMule, Kazaa, Gnutella or any program that allows the illegal sharing of files over the internet. If found we will need to remove it or not allow it to be connected.
- X** Visiting websites that are not allowed to be accessed under our Acceptable Use Agreement with our Internet Service Provider. This includes sites containing illegal or pornographic material.
- X** Connecting to the network without an active and recently updated antivirus program running where this is available for your device.
- X** Using an operating system that is not genuine – for example, an unlicensed copy of Microsoft Windows.
- X** Using the college internet connection for any use that could be regarded as breaking the law.

PLEASE NOTE

If you are found to have broken any of the above rules you will be blocked from accessing the internet via the college internet connection.



Our Internet Service Provider also requires us to record certain details so that any illegal and forbidden use can be traced to the user. All internet traffic is logged back to the device. To do this we will record some technical information when we carry out a security check on your device; this includes recording the device name.

We will either ask you to log-on to your device and allow us to carry out the check **or** ask you to provide us with the log-in information you use (such as the username and password). This information will be destroyed as soon as the security check has been completed.

Please complete the information below. We will not allow any of your own devices to be connected to the network unless you have signed the below, or someone has signed on your behalf.

Student name:

Reminder

Computers found to have file sharing software installed will not be allowed to access the college's computer network, nor will computers without up-to-date antivirus software. We will install free antivirus software such as AVG with your permission.

I have read and understand the rules and regulations outlined above and agree to comply with them. Please tick this box if you agree:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student **Parent / Carer (on behalf of student)**

For internal use only. Completed form to be forwarded to IT Helpdesk.





Ullenwood, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 9QU

Email enquiries@nationalstar.org

Tel 01242 527631



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www.nationalstar.org



National Star

Realising the aspirations
of people with disabilities



CHANGE

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www.changepeople.org

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