



16-19 Bursary Fund and Free Meals Policy and Procedures 2021/22

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1. Policy Statement

The College is committed to distributing the 16-19 Bursary Fund in a fair and consistent way in line with Education and Skills Funding Authority (ESFA) guidance. Funding will be used to help support those young people who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education or training.

2. ESFA – 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16-19 Bursary fund is split into three elements:

- Bursaries for Defined Vulnerable Groups of up to £1200
- Free Meals
- Discretionary Bursary

If a student's circumstances change during the year the 16-19 bursary can be awarded on a pro-rata basis.

2.1 16-19 Defined Vulnerable Groups Bursary

Students who fall into the following categories are eligible for support up to a maximum of £1,200. This can be made up of financial support, bus passes, funds for kits / uniforms and for compulsory trips. To qualify students must be under 19 on the 31st August 2021 and be on a study programme at the College. In addition they must fall into one of the following groups;

- Young people in care, care leavers
- Young People in receipt of income support (or Universal Credit)
- Disabled young people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance who also receive Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments)

2.2 Free Meals

Students must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31st August 2021 to be eligible for a free meal in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Students who turn 19 during their course remain eligible for free meals until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 or to their end of course, whichever is sooner.

Students in receipt of or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits may be eligible:

- Income support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under the 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 HRMC
- Working Tax Credit* run-on – paid 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa

Students aged 19-24 who are subject to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are entitled to a free meal while attending their provision if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Students aged over 19 who are continuing on the same study programme (19+ continuers) are eligible for a free meal if they started before they turned 19, are eligible and all other scheme criteria is met.

Students in receipt of the £1200 bursary maybe entitled to Free Meals.

2.3 Discretionary Bursary

For those students who do not meet the eligibility criteria above, but are facing financial hardship, they will be able to apply to the discretionary fund for help towards funds for kits / uniforms, compulsory trips, University trips, UCAS fees, DBS (including portable DBS costs) and other course related costs including support for distance learning, to a maximum of £750. Students will need to provide evidence to support their request e.g. College order forms for kits, signed book lists from course tutors.

To qualify students must be under 19 on the 31st August 2021 and be on a study programme at Southport College. Students must have a household income of less than £35,000 as assessed by HMRC, or the family must be in receipt of a means-tested benefit.

For students who do not meet these criteria but are facing financial hardship they will need to have a meeting with an advisor to discuss their individual circumstances. In these circumstances awards will be made at the discretion of the Head of Student Services.

For both elements of the fund students cannot apply for funding towards the following:

- Fees for replacement passes and parking
- Leisure classes
- Students cannot double claim funding e.g. childcare fees
- Travel (with the exception of those listed below)

All students aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are eligible to apply for discretionary bursary funding if all other scheme criteria are met.

Students aged over 19 who are continuing on the same study programme (19+ continuers) if they started before they turned 19 are eligible if they meet all other scheme criteria.

3. Travel Passes

For those who live more than 1 mile but less than 3 away from College and whose household income is less than £35,000 or in receipt of a means tested benefit this will be funded from the Bursary Fund.

For those students who live over 3 miles but whose household income is above the threshold above and are not in receipt of means tested benefits, for 2021/22 College will subsidise the cost of the most cost effective travel pass available.

For those students in receipt of the £1,200 bursary, part of their award will be used to cover the full cost of the pass.

Distances must be the shortest walking distance, measured by Google maps

For full time students who live outside of the areas where passes are available the College operates subsidised travel costs fund for students.

For full details of College Travel Passes and Travel Fund please see 'Travel Passes & Funds – Policy and Procedures'.

4. Childcare (Care to Learn)

The 16-19 Bursary fund and Discretionary awards cannot be used to fund childcare. Students under the age of 20 on the day their course starts, should apply for funding through Care to Learn. The fund can help support childcare costs whilst studying or on placement, childcare travel costs and fees to retain childcare places during half terms. Students can be supported through the application process by the Student Information Team.

5. Application Process and Documentary Evidence

The application process for funds will be open from w/c 5th July 2021 and until such time as funds be used up. All applications will be considered based on the funding available.

Pay My Student

For both aspects of 16-19 funding, including applications for travel passes, students must complete an application using the on line student support bursary service, Pay My Student. Documentary evidence is required to make an assessment of income and / or identification of being in a priority group (as laid down in the ESFA guidance). This could be pay slips, P60, proof of earning for self-employment, bank statements, Tax Credit Award Notice, Universal Credit monthly statement, proof of benefits (letters from DWP / Job Centre) this list not exhaustive. In the case of young people in care/care leavers they will need a letter of confirmation from the local authority.

The 'application date' will be the date the completed form is received along with all relevant documentation.

6. Payments

Each request for financial support will be assessed individually. For students eligible for the 16-19 Vulnerable Students Bursary, requests for travel passes, kits / uniforms, statutory free meals and trips will be assessed first.

7. Exemptions

Students in the following categories are not eligible for 16-19 bursaries or discretionary awards:

- Young people on Higher Education Courses
- Young people on Waged Apprenticeships
- Young people in prison or a young offender institution or who have been released on temporary licence e.g. day release

7. Residency Eligibility Criteria

Young people must satisfy the residency criteria as set out in the ESFA 2020/21: Funding Regulations for post 16 provision. This document can be downloaded from the EFA website.

8. Hardship Funds (Emergency Funds)

Hardship funds are one off payments for students who are facing extreme crisis e.g. Homelessness, sudden change in domestic circumstances and need for food, travel, clothing (this list is not exhaustive). These funds are primarily allocated by the Head of Student Services /Advice & Guidance Officer to enable any other necessary support to be accessed/arranged. Any student receiving support from this fund must also be immediately referred to the Welfare and Safeguarding team to ensure all of their needs are being addressed.

9. Vulnerable Learners

Students who are identified as Vulnerable Learners should direct any requests regarding funding to the Head of Student Services (or in their absence to a member of the Safeguarding Team).

Allocations are tailored to individual needs. In some cases carers and social workers are involved in establishing the most appropriate way of getting the funding to the young person in conjunction with the Safeguarding Officers and/or Head of Student Services.

10. Appeals

Any student, who is dissatisfied with the decision made regarding the allocation of funds, may appeal in writing to the Head of Student Services within 15 term time days of receipt of letter.

The Appeals Panel will be made of a member of the Senior Leadership Team and 2 managers.

The Head of Student Services or Student Finance Administrator will present the information to the panel.

The student will be informed of the decision of the Panel within 10 term time days of receipt of the letter of appeal.

11. Essential Elements

This policy and procedures will operate as a transparent, consistent system, with clear criteria for eligibility, allowing funds to be targeted at those students in financial hardship within the EFA guidelines. This is ensured by:

- Procedures / guidelines for staff, updated annually
- Staff training and development meetings

A variety of methods will be used to publicise the availability of funds, including the application procedure and appeals procedure. These include;

- Financial information booklet – updated annually, available on line and within the Student Information Centre
- Admissions correspondence
- Information from admissions tutors at interview
- Information at the point of enrolment
- Information at Induction
- Internal advertising of funds
- College web pages
- VLE - Moodle

To ensure all information is correct the Student Funding Administrator will link with tutors and view Pro monitor comments to;

- Poor attendance by students without a valid reason can result in funding being withdrawn / reduced
- Head of Faculty/Curriculum Leader to provide the Advice and Guidance Officer with standard kit lists / compulsory trip costs / materials and equipment lists

- Tutors to email the agreement of additional funding to the Advice and Guidance Officer for standard items i.e. individual kits items, course books

12. Monitoring effectiveness

Monthly updates will be provided to the Senior Leadership Team. An annual report to CET, Corporation and Equality and Diversity Committee will report on funds spent and identify links between financial support and retention and achievement.

Where additional funds become available part way through a year, the policy will be reviewed to ensure the available funds are targeted appropriately.

13. Confidentiality, data protection and retention

All personal and sensitive information will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.

The Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are not only restrictions on disclosure of information about the College, they are bound by a common law duty of confidentiality. This duty prevents the College from releasing information about students or other stakeholders, without their consent. This duty applies to manual records as well as information held on computers.

Information which must be treated as confidential includes the names and addresses of students and any other information about them which is not publicly known, i.e. “personal data”. Accordingly, to ensure that the College does not breach its duty, no information, even if it only exists in printed form, should be disclosed unless all the relevant procedures have been followed.

All documents are held for the assessment of eligibility to the fund and audit purposes only. All information will be stored securely and treated sensitively. All documents will be kept by the College for 6 years.

14. Administration of the Fund

Administration of the fund is capped at 5% of the value of the spend.

15. Policy Update

The procedures will be reviewed annually in line with the release of the ESFA Guidance and are the responsibility of the Head of Student Services.

16. Other Sources of Funding

The College operates or has links to a number of other sources of funding. For further details of any of the funds listed below please contact the Student Information Centre.

- Travel Passes & Funds Policy and Procedures
- Hardship Fund

- 19+ Learner Support Fund (Including 20+ Childcare funding)
- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund
- Care to Learn
- Professional and Career Development Loan
- Support via Student Loans Company (HE Students)
- Disabled Student Allowance (HE Students)