

Financial Support for Students Procedure

1 Purpose

To outline the financial support available to eligible learners, eligibility criteria, and the application processes.

2 Procedures

2.1 16–19 Discretionary Bursary Scheme

2.1.1 Eligibility

- Students must be aged 16 or over, and less than 19 years of age on the 31st August in the academic year in which they start their qualification. If a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to receive support until the end of the programme. Students aged 19 or over on 31 August in the academic year in which they start their qualification, are eligible to apply for this fund if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16-18 ('19+ continuers') or those who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- The student must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that ensure quality (e.g. Ofsted) and must end in a qualification.
- Students should have a household income of £26,000 or less (both salary and any benefits combined).
- All applicants will go through a financial needs assessment, which will determine how much money the college will allocate towards each support need. This will mean that some students may receive more than others, for example, students who travel further may receive more support with travel. In some very rare scenarios, the financial needs assessment may indicate that the student does not need any financial support and therefore will not be allocated any funds.
- The Assistant Principal – Student Support or Bursary Officer (College Group) may use their discretion to approve bursary applications that do not meet the household income criteria, but only in exceptional circumstances.

2.1.2 Those Who Are Not Eligible

- The bursary fund is not available for those on HE courses (including HND, HNC, and foundation degrees), they should be pointed to Student Finance England (www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance).
- Young people on waged apprenticeships cannot access the bursary.
- We cannot help towards leisure courses.

2.1.3 What We Can Support

- Resource fees.
- Essential books, equipment, and uniform.
- Essential visits and trips.
- University Interviews and Open Days.
- Student Fare Card Cost.
- Travel to and from college, only if a free travel option is not available to the student.

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- Other essential costs, where approved by the Assistant Principal - Student Support or Bursary Officer (College Group), in accordance with ESFA guidance.
- The College **cannot** help with Childcare for students under 20 but they can apply to Care 2 Learn who are able to support with childcare costs (see the Bursary Officer for more information or ask the learner to visit www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn and they can request an application form online).

2.1.4 Payments

- The College will endeavour to cover the full costs of eligible support; (with the exception of Travel payments which is currently at 80%) however, this is dependent on the bursary funds available and the number of student applications received.
- Payments for travel will be made by BACs on the 1st Friday of every month (if this date clashes with a public holiday, we may need to process payments earlier). Payments will reflect students' attendance, for example, if a student has 90% attendance for the most previous month, they will receive 90% of their travel allocation. Students are expected to participate pro-actively in learning and do all their assigned work and maintain a good standard of behaviour. If these standards are not met, their bursary will be reviewed and may be temporarily or permanently stopped.
- Payment towards essential trips, uniform, kit, resource fees or other identified support needs, as approved by the Assistant Principal -Student Support or Bursary Officer (College Group), will be paid by either internal transfer or a reimbursement on production of a valid receipt.
- If a student is eligible for support, they will receive an answer from the Bursary Officer who is administering the bursary scheme within 10 working days in the form of either a letter or an email, outlining their bursary allocation.
- All payments made must be used for the specified reason i.e., travel. Any misuse of bursary funds may result in future payments being stopped and recovery of any payments already made.

2.2 **Vulnerable Bursary Scheme**

As part of the 16-19 Bursary fund, the most vulnerable students may be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200.

2.2.1 Eligibility

- Students must be aged 16 or over, and less than 19 years of age on the 31 August in the academic year in which they start their qualification. If a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to receive support until the end of the programme.
- The student must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that ensure quality (e.g., Ofsted) and must end in a qualification.
- Students must be in a defined vulnerable group
 - In care.
 - Care Leavers.
 - Receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.
 - Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.
- All applicants will go through a financial needs assessment, which will determine how much money the College will allocate towards each support need. This will mean that some students may receive more than others, for example, students who travel further may receive more support with travel. In some very rare scenarios, the financial needs assessment may indicate that the student does not need any financial support through the bursary fund and therefore will not be allocated any funds.

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- All payments made must be used for the specified reason i.e., travel. Any misuse of bursary funds may result in future payments being stopped and recovery of any payments already made.

2.2.2 What We Can Support:

- Resource fees.
- Essential books, equipment, and uniform.
- Essential visits and trips.
- University Interviews and Open Days.
- Student Fare Card Cost.
- Travel to and from college, only if a free travel option is not available to the student.
- Other essential costs, where approved by the Assistant Principle – Student Support or Bursary Officer (College Group), in accordance with ESFA guidance.
- The College **cannot** help with Childcare for students under 20 but they can apply to Care 2 Learn who are able to support with childcare costs (see the Student Bursary Adviser for more information or ask the learner to visit www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn and they can request an application form online).

2.2.3 Payments:

- Though the College will endeavour to cover the full costs of eligible support, depending on the amount available and the number of applications, this may not always be possible.
- Payments for travel will be made by BACs on the 1st Friday of every month (if this date clashes with a public holiday, we may need to process payments earlier). Payments will reflect students' attendance, for example, if a student has 90% attendance in the most previous month, they will receive 90% of their travel allocation. Students are expected to participate pro-actively in learning and do all their assigned work and maintain a good standard of behaviour. If these standards are not met, their bursary will be reviewed and may be temporarily or permanently stopped.
- Payments for other support needs such as, Kit, Uniform, Essential Trips etc. will be either, paid for by the College on behalf of the student, or reimbursed on production of a valid receipt.
- If a student is eligible for support, they will receive an answer from the Bursary Officer who is administering the bursary scheme within 10 working days in the form of either a letter or an email, outlining how much support they will receive.
- All payments made must be used for the specified reason i.e., travel. Any misuse of bursary funds may result in future payments being stopped and recovery of any payments already made.

2.3 Further Education Free Meals

2.3.1 Eligibility

- Students must be aged 16 or over, and less than 19 years of age on the 31st August in the academic year in which they start their qualification. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible for meals if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16-18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- The criteria for eligibility is set by the ESFA and the College does not have any discretion to award outside of this criteria. Students, or their parents/guardians, must be in receipt of one or more of the following:
 - Income Support.
 - Income based Jobseekers Allowance.
 - Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
 - The guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
 - Child Tax Credit (provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC.

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- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa (after tax and not including any benefits you get).
- You may also be eligible for Free School Meals if you were already receiving free meals on 1 April 2018.
- Be in receipt of a Vulnerable Bursary, though please note that this is paid for through a separate fund.

2.3.2 Payments

- The Free School Meal fund is paid at a maximum of £2.53, via the Government for each day a student attends College. The College will endeavour to increase this by £2.47 through a separate discretionary budget but cannot make any guarantees as the amount per year is subject to change depending on the number of applications and funds available.
- In accordance with ESFA guidelines, the College will not make any monetary payments to students for Free School Meals. Their student card will act as an electronic voucher that can be redeemed at the cafeteria tills.
- During any Government imposed lockdown, the ESFA may allow the College to make direct payments to students, but this will depend on current guidance and law.

2.4 **19+ Discretionary Learner Support**

2.4.1 Eligibility

- Students must be aged 19 years or older on the 31st August in the academic year in which they start their study. There is no upper age limit.
- Their course must be eligible for ESFA funding.
- The student must be participating in a provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that ensure quality (e.g. Ofsted) and must end in a qualification, we cannot help towards leisure courses.
- Students can be on a part time or full-time course, subject to qualification criteria stated above.
- Students must have a household income of £26,000 or less (both salary and any benefits combined).
- All applicants will go through a financial needs assessment, which will determine how much money the College will allocate towards each support need. This will mean that some students may receive more than others, for example, students who travel further may receive more support with travel. In some very rare scenarios, the financial needs assessment may indicate that the student does not need any financial support and therefore will not be allocated any funds.

2.4.2 Those Who Are Not Eligible

- The bursary fund is not available for those on HE courses (including HND, HNC, and foundation degrees), they should be pointed to Student Finance England (www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance).
- Students on waged apprenticeships cannot access the bursary.
- Students who are funding their course through the Advanced Learner Loan (please see section. 2.5).

2.4.3 What We Can Support

- Resource fees.
- Essential books, equipment, and uniform.

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- Essential visits and trips.
- University Interviews and Open Days.
- Student Fare Card Cost.
- Travel to and from college, only if a free travel option is not available to the student
- Other essential costs, where approved by the Assistant Principal – Student Support or Bursary Officer (College Group), in accordance with ESFA guidance.
- The college bursary can fund Childcare for students aged 20 or over at the start of their course through the 20+ Childcare scheme. Support will only be provided for the times a student is timetabled to be in college and up to 1 hour travelling each day. Payments will only be made to Ofsted registered providers, after any free Government entitlement to childcare has been exhausted. Students must ensure their Childcare provider completes and returns a 'Childcare terms and conditions' form before any payments can be made. The college **cannot** fund Childcare for students under 20 years old at the start of their course but, they can apply to Care 2 Learn who are able to support with childcare costs. For more information visit www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn

2.4.4 Payments

- Though the College will endeavour to cover the full costs of eligible support, (with the exception of Travel payments which is currently at 80%) depending on the amount available and the number of applications, this may not always be possible.
- Payments for travel will be made by BACs on the 1st Friday of every month (if this date clashes with a public holiday, we may need to process payments earlier). Payments will reflect students' attendance, for example, if a student has 90% attendance in the most previous month, they will receive 90% of their travel allocation. Students are expected to participate pro-actively in learning and do all their assigned work and maintain a good standard of behaviour. If these standards are not met, their bursary will be reviewed and may be temporarily or permanently stopped.
- Payments for other support needs such as, Kit, Uniform, Essential Trips etc. will be either, paid for by the College on behalf of the student, or reimbursed on production of a valid receipt.
- Payments for childcare will be made directly to the childcare provider.
- If a student is eligible for support, they will receive an answer from the Bursary Officer who is administering the bursary scheme within 10 working days in the form of either a letter or an email, outlining how much support they will receive.
- All payments made must be used for the specified reason i.e., travel. Any misuse of bursary funds may result in future payments being stopped and recovery of any payments already made.

2.5 **Advanced Learner Loans Bursary**

2.5.1 Eligibility

- Students must be aged 19 years or older on the 31st August in the academic year in which they start their study.
- Their course must be eligible for ESFA funding.
- The student must have an approved Advanced Learner Loan and be able to provide evidence of this.
- The student must be participating in a provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that ensure quality (e.g. Ofsted) and must end in a qualification, we cannot help towards leisure courses.
- Students can be on a part time or full-time course, subject to qualification criteria stated above.
- Students must have a household income of £26,000 or less (both salary and any benefits combined).
- All applicants will go through a financial needs assessment, which will determine how much money the College will allocate towards each support need. This will mean that some students

may receive more than others, for example, students who travel further may receive more support with travel. In some very rare scenarios, the financial needs assessment may indicate that the student does not need any financial support and therefore will not be allocated any funds.

2.5.2 Those Who Are Not Eligible

- Students aged 19 or older who are not in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan (please see section 2.1 to 2.4).
- The bursary fund is not available for those on HE courses (including HND, HNC, and foundation degrees), they should be pointed to Student Finance England (www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)
- Students on waged apprenticeships cannot access the bursary.

2.5.3 What Can We Support

- Resource fees.
- Essential books, equipment, and uniform.
- Essential visits and trips.
- University Interviews and Open Days.
- Student Fare Card Cost.
- Travel to and from college, only if a free travel option is not available to the student.
- Other essential costs, where approved by the Assistant Principal – Student Support or Bursary Officer (College Group), in accordance with ESFA guidance.
- The college bursary can fund Childcare for students aged 20 or over at the start of their course. Support will only be provided for the times a student is timetabled to be in college and up to 1 hour travelling each day. Payments will only be made to Ofsted registered providers, after any free Government entitlement to childcare has been exhausted. Students must ensure their Childcare provider completes and returns a 'Childcare terms and conditions' form before any payments can be made. The college **cannot** fund Childcare for students below 20 years old at the start of their course but, they can apply to Care 2 Learn who are able to support with childcare costs. For more information visit www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn

2.5.4 Payments

- Though the College will endeavour to cover the full costs of eligible support, (with the exception of Travel payments which is currently 80%) depending on the amount available and the number of applications, this may not always be possible.
- Payments for travel will be made by BACs on the 1st Friday of every month (if this date clashes with a public holiday, we may need to process payments earlier). Payments will reflect students' attendance, for example, if a student has 90% attendance in the most recent month, they will receive 90% of their travel allocation. Students are expected to participate pro-actively in learning and do all their assigned work and maintain a good standard of behaviour. If these standards are not met, their bursary will be reviewed and may be temporarily or permanently stopped.
- Payments for other support needs such as, Kit, Uniform, Essential Trips etc. will be either, paid for by the College on behalf of the student, or reimbursed on production of a valid receipt.
- Payments for childcare will be made directly to the childcare provider.
- If a student is eligible for support, they will receive an answer from the Bursary Officer who is administering the bursary scheme within 10 working days in the form of either a letter or an email, outlining how much support they will receive.
- All payments made must be used for the specified reason i.e., travel. Any misuse of bursary funds may result in future payments being stopped and recovery of any payments already made.

3 Unavoidable Absences

- We understand that some students may have some unavoidable absences throughout the year. In these instances, although they will still be marked as absent, the Bursary payment will be calculated as if they have attended.
- Any unavoidable absences to be calculated as part of the bursary must be evidenced, and must be approved by the Director of Learning, as well as the Assistant Principal – Student Support (College Group),
- Examples of unavoidable absences:
 - Home Office appointments.
 - Solicitor appointments.
 - NHS hospital referrals.
- Examples of absences unlikely to be approved:
 - Student was unwell.
 - A standard GP appointment.
 - Appointments that can be booked outside of class times (e.g., appointment at a phone store).
 - Student stays home for a parcel/engineer appointment.
- The Assistant Principal - Student Support (College Group) may approve any other unavoidable absences at their discretion.

4 Access to Procedure

This Procedure is available on the College OSC Gateway.

5 Mechanisms for Feedback

Constructive comment on the continued improvement of this procedure is welcomed and should be forwarded to the Chief Operating Officer.

6 Further information

- Applications Forms 2023/24
- Childcare Terms & Conditions 2023/24
- Student Bursary Information Sheet 2023/24
- Allocated course-related costs 2023/24 (According to DoL's)

7 **Produced/Reviewed by:** Bursary Officer **Date:** March 2024

8 **Approved by:** Executive / Directorate **Date:** 2 March 2024

9 **Review Date:** June 2024

10 **Policy Code:** OSC33A