



**Buckinghamshire
College Group**

College Support Scheme for Students 2018-19

Responsible Officer:
Date:
Review Date:
Policy authorised by:

Head of Student Services
September 2018
August 2019
Executive

Financial Support Policy and Procedure

1. Strategic Overview

Buckinghamshire College Group is committed to assisting students and ensuring that financial hardship is not a barrier to stay in education, particularly supporting those students who are most in need and economically or socially disadvantaged. Staff in Student Services are here to help you with information and advice about financial support and the eligibility criteria for various packages. Please contact us if you need any additional information.

2. Scope of Policy

This document provides information on the Financial Support funds available by the Government. The financial support is administered by the College to assist students who are experiencing financial hardship, to participate and to remain in education, particularly those who are disadvantaged and in need with course-associated costs such as travel, equipment and lunch. Please take the time to read the information in this guide before completing an application form. It includes the eligibility criteria and the application process.

There are various forms of financial support available:

1. 16-19 Guaranteed Bursary
2. 16-19 Discretionary Bursary
3. 19+ Discretionary Learner Support (DLS)
4. 20+ Childcare
5. Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund
6. Free College Meals

3. The Policy

Financial support is subject to availability and is for enrolled learners at Buckinghamshire College Group on eligible courses who meet the financial support eligibility criteria. Individual learners must demonstrate a need for financial support. However, learners who are eligible for financial support are not automatically entitled to it.

Whilst respecting an individual's right to confidentiality, the student services team also reserves the right to enquire into their financial circumstances to determine their actual need. This information is only exchanged on a need to know basis.

The methods of payment for agreed financial support are direct payment into a bank account via BACS or in exceptional circumstances cash. Direct payments are made to learners, only if the student is found not to be responsible for their own finances can the payment be made to a third party i.e. parent/guardian.

Financial support is linked to attendance, punctuality, behaviour and completion of learning aims in accordance with college policies on behaviour, punctuality, attendance and learner performance.

Buckinghamshire College Group will make information about financial support available during the year via the college website, in written material and throughout the application/enrolment and induction period.

Terms

- Funding is limited and offered on a first come first served basis. Meeting the eligibility does not guarantee an award. Allocation of funds will be subject to the availability of funds.
- Funds are administered by the College to assist students experiencing financial hardship and help towards course associated costs
- Students should be aware that any payments from the Support Fund may affect their entitlement to other benefits (e.g. JSA, ESA, universal credit) It is your responsibility to declare any funds received from these funds.
- Just because a learner is eligible to receive financial support, this does not give them an entitlement to receive it.
- Each application to the financial support fund will be individually assessed.
- Awarded funds are subject to a minimum attendance of 90%. This includes attending English and Mathematics classes.
- If a student withdraws from a course the college reserves the right to request all monies paid and any equipment purchased by the college to be returned.
- Students are required to inform us of any change in circumstances as they may affect eligibility.
- All applicants to childcare support must complete the correct forms and agreements. All Childcare providers must be OFSTED registered.
- Eligible students may be expected to contribute to the cost of their childcare provision.
- All payments will be made directly to the childcare provider by BACS each month on receipt of an invoice
- Retainer and holiday cover costs may not be claimed for.
- Extra meals not already included in the daily price, are not covered and must be paid in full by yourself to the provider.
- You must use your free early learning childcare funding for 3 to 4 year olds entitlement first.
- For consistent absences Childcare funding will be withdrawn and you will be liable for any outstanding fees.
- You are responsible for your childcare place until your application has been assessed and approved. This may take up to 4 weeks. Any relevant refunds will be made accordingly if your application is approved successfully.
- Please advise your provider if you have applied for funding from the College.
- If you are required to give 1 month's written notice prior to leaving/ finishing your course, please adhere to this as the contract is between you and the Childcare Provider.

16-19 Guaranteed Bursary

This fund is also known as Vulnerable Learners Bursary Fund, it is not income assessed and guarantees a bursary of up to £1,200 per academic year

Who is eligible to apply for 16-18 Guaranteed Bursary?

- You must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2018
- You must be enrolled on an EFA funded programme
- You must fall into one of the following criteria:
 1. Someone who is in care
 2. Care leavers (someone who has been in care but isn't any longer)
 3. Be on Income Support/Universal Credit
 4. Be in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance (or Universal Credit) and Personal Independence Payment

Guaranteed Bursary students may receive the following:

- a weekly payment
- help towards books and equipment
- help towards the cost of educational visits
- help towards the cost of lunch
- help towards the cost of travel
- help towards other course associated costs.

Please note, you will be required to show evidence of your individual circumstances.

16-19 Discretionary Bursary

Eligible students will receive a discretionary bursary if they meet the terms and conditions. This fund is to assist those who face genuine financial barriers to staying on in education and will help with costs such as books, equipment and other course-associated expenses. Those who apply will need to have their parent/guardians' income assessed.

Who is eligible to apply for 16-19 Discretionary Bursary?

- You must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2018
- Those with a household income of £30,000 or below
- You must meet the residency requirements.
- You must be enrolled on an EFA funded programme.

This fund is provided to help with the following:

- books and equipment
- educational visits
- lunch
- travel
- other course-associated costs

Who is **not** eligible to apply for 16-18 Discretionary Bursary?

- 16-18 year olds studying Higher Education qualifications
- Waged apprenticeships.

19+ Discretionary Learner Support

Eligible students will receive a discretionary bursary if they meet the terms and conditions. This fund is to assist those who face genuine financial barriers to staying on in education and will help with costs such as books, equipment and other course-associated expenses. Those who apply will need to have their household income assessed.

Who is eligible to apply for 19+ Discretionary Learner Support?

- You must be aged 19+ on 31 August 2018 (19+ students who are receiving a student loan need to apply for a Loan Bursary scheme)
 - Have a household income of £35,000 or below
 - You must meet the residency requirements
 - You must be enrolled on an SFA funded programme
- This fund is provided to help with the following:**
- books and equipment
 - educational visits
 - travel
 - other course-associated costs

20+ Childcare

This fund is part of Discretionary Learner Support and is available to assist students with the costs of childcare while studying at college. Those who apply will need to have their household income assessed.

Who is eligible to apply for 20+ Childcare?

- You must be aged 19+ on 31 August 2018 (19+ students who are receiving the student loans need to apply to a 19+ Loan Bursary scheme)
 - Have a household income of £35,000 or below
 - You must meet the residency requirements
 - You must be enrolled on an SFA funded programme
 - Those who have one or more children
2. If you are under 20 years of age you could get help with your childcare payments through the Care to Learn scheme. Contact 0800 121 8989. Please visit www.gov.uk/care-tolearn

This fund is provided to help with the following:

- childcare costs

Please note the following:

1. The childcare provider must be OFSTED registered. Informal childcare cannot be funded, e. g. provided by family members, or friends.

Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund

Those aged 19 years and above, studying a level 3 or above will be able to apply for an Adult Advanced Learner Loan Bursary. This fund is income assessed and eligible students will receive a discretionary funding if they meet the terms and conditions. Those who apply will need to have their household income assessed.

Who is eligible to apply for Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund?

- You must be aged 19 or over on or after 31 August 2018
- Be enrolled on an eligible course at Level 3 or above
- Had a loan approved by the Student Loans Company
- Have a household income of £35,000 or below
- You must meet the residency requirements

This fund is provided to help with the following:

- books and equipment
- educational visits
- travel
- other course-associated costs
- childcare
- exceptional learning support e.g. learning support assistants and necessary adjustments under the Equality Act

Free Meals

This fund is aimed at disadvantaged students. For the purposes of eligibility, 'disadvantage' is defined by a student being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits (see the eligibility criteria below).

Who is eligible to apply for Free Meals?

- You must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2018
- Those aged between 19 and 25 on 31 August 2018 who are subject to Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or Educational Health Care plan (EHC Plan)
- You must meet the residency requirements
- You must be enrolled on an EFA funded programme
- Students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:
 - 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 they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and
 - have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC - Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for WTC
 - Universal Credit
- Eligible students will receive a free meal for each day they are timetabled to be in college.

Fund	Expected Support
16-19 Guaranteed Bursary	Guaranteed bursary of up to £1200 Travel costs (based on capped zone rates) Kit and uniform costs Trip costs DBS cost (eligible courses only) Free College Meal
16-19 Discretionary Bursary (Household income under £30,000)	Travel costs (based on capped zone rates) Kit and uniform costs Trip costs DBS cost (eligible courses only) Free College Meal
19+ Discretionary Learner Support (Household income under £35,000)	Travel costs (based on capped zone rates) Kit and uniform costs Trip costs DBS cost (eligible courses only)
20+ Childcare (Household income under £35,000)	Childcare costs based on household income
Advanced Learner Loan Bursary	Bursary dependant on household income

Proof of Income

For the purposes of the 16-19 Bursary, 19+ Bursary, 20+ Childcare and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary, household income is all income received by persons living within the household. This can be benefits, salary, self-employed income, a combination of these, or any other means of income received.

Original documents must be provided, as follows:

Either proof of an income based benefit:-

Income Support
Universal Credit
Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
Working and Child Tax Credit (provided annual income does not exceed £16,190)
Pension Credit (provided it includes the guarantee element)
Income Related Employment Support Allowance
Housing Benefit
Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Or proof of household income to include the latest payslips, working families tax credits award notice.

Self-employed people must supply proof of income for the most recent tax year before enrolment. For example, year 2017-2018 accounts would be required for enrolment in September 2018. This must be either a set of accounts prepared by an accountant or Self-Assessment Form SA302 from HMRC (an on-line calculation of your income).

Appeals Procedure

Learners who are unsuccessful in their application for financial support or have had a change in circumstances may first discuss their concerns with a member of staff in Student Services. If their concern is not resolved to their satisfaction, they can put their appeal in writing to the Head of Student Services. Appeals must be for valid reasons and supported by evidence.

5. Equality and Diversity

All requests will be reviewed fairly following the policy; in exceptional circumstances to ensure equality of access to financial support individual exceptions may be made with final decisions agreed by the Head of Student Services and the Curriculum Director Student Success.

6. Data Protection

All students personal data is held securely. Information can only be shared with the applicants consent. For further guidance see Data Protection Policy and Procedure and Data Protection Policy Statement for Students available at www.buckscollegegroup.ac.uk

Checklist:

Impact on Students/Staff:

Strategy relates to staff but impacts on the quality of the student experience

Impact on Diversity:

This is an inclusive policy

Impact on Health & Safety:

Fundamental to health and safety and safeguarding, through providing a safe learning environment

Impact on Data Protection/Freedom of Information:

This policy will be accessible to the public through the website and upon request through the College compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act

Link with Strategic Plan:

- Improve overall College performance to good or outstanding
- To deliver effective support and guidance services to meet individual needs in learning development
- Demonstrate an outstanding commitment to inclusion
- Enhance the working environment to value, develop and motivate staff at all levels
- Improve sustainability and effective use of resources

Communication/Consultation Plan:

The strategy will be accessible on the AC policies area on Cloud and on the College website.

Process of review:

The Strategy will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Process of review of effectiveness:

The impact of the strategy will be reviewed through application numbers, retention rates and student satisfaction.

Responsibility for maintaining this strategy rests with:

Director of Student Success