

16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

Policy Owner: Head of Admissions & Onboarding

Date of Approval: May 2024

Approved By: SLT Policy Committee

Date of Next Review: Annually



Barking & Dagenham College

Our Mission

To unleash potential, creating better futures for our learners, businesses and communities **Our**

Our Vision

A **Truly Great College**, delivering inspirational learning and excellence through career focused education.

Our Values

Learner and customer focused – ensuring they are at the heart of everything we do

Respectful – by valuing and treating all fairly and as individuals

Passionate – demonstrating energising, engaging and inspiring all to achieve their potential

Collaborative – always working together to achieve excellence and growth

Innovative – leading the way, seeking new ways to continually improve

Excellent – in learning, teaching and assessment, the key to our success

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1 Introduction / Context

This 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy outlines the College's policy for managing the 16-19 ESFA Bursary Funds for students to Further Education courses within the college. The College is committed to providing a professional and transparent service and to the pursuit of clear, fair and consistently applied policies and procedures.

2 Principles / Purpose

Barking and Dagenham College aims to deliver a clear, consistent, fair and timely Student Financial Support process that is fully understood and adhered to by all staff and learners. The College will ensure that the principles of this policy are consistently applied to all learners regardless of age, choice of course, mode of attendance and funding type.

The College values diversity and inclusion and is committed to promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination. Therefore, staff will apply and administer this policy fairly and consistently to ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, young persons in care and care leavers, young carers and care givers, young parents, youth offenders, and those receiving free school meals.

The college will accept applicants against an approved criteria which is outlined below taking learners individual needs into consideration.

2.1 16-19 ESFA Funding

The funding issued is based on guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and consolidates best practice within the sector. The college is committed to ensuring the fund is used to provide some financial assistance with the costs associated with coming to college such as travel, books, uniform and equipment. Funds are designed to support vulnerable and disadvantaged students and to remove barriers to education or training. Learners who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to it. If demand exceeds the available funds, then reduced awards may be given. When funds are fully committed no further awards will be made.

There are two types of funds available

1. 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund
2. 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary Fund

Regardless of fund, all learners follow the same application and assessment process, with differences applying to the evidence we request and what they are eligible for.

2.2 Categories of support

- Course materials, equipment, books and uniforms – A separate request form must be completed by the learner's tutor to be considered for this funding; awards will be made to a third party where possible.
- Travel expenses – To be considered for support the student must live outside of a London Borough or have a journey via bus that is longer than 2 hours. Each payment is then awarded based on the student maintaining a minimum 87% attendance for the previous month, this is a cross college attendance threshold.
- External registration fees e.g. DBS - A separate request form must be completed by the learners tutor to be considered for this funding
- Assistance towards compulsory course trips – The course tutor or curriculum manager would need to have made prior arrangements with the Student Financial Support Team Leader or Head of Admissions & Onboarding. These trips must be compulsory to the learner completing the course.
- Monthly Bursary - The learner must maintain a minimum attendance of 87% each month to qualify for payment
- Childcare – This is funded through Care to Learn. For more information, visit the Care to Learn website included in appendices below.
- Free Meals – If eligible this is paid on a monthly basis, directly into the students nominated account and is payable for each timetabled day in college, including work experience

The Student Financial Support department may be able to support towards other college related expenses. Such requests would need to be put in writing to either the Student Financial Support Team Leader or Head of Admissions & Onboarding.

2.3 Eligibility Criteria

- The learner must have a current enrolment for the current academic year.
- The learner must be eligible for and funded via the ESFA for their course, using the ESFA Young Peoples Funding Guidance.
- The learner must not be enrolled on a Work Based Learning or Apprenticeship course.
- The learner must not be enrolled on a Higher Education course.
- If the learner is on a 1-year programme. The learner must be aged 16-18 on the 31st August 2023 **or** aged 19-24 on the 31st August 2023 with an Education Health Care plan.
- If the learner is on a 2-year programme. The learner must be aged 16-18 on the 31st August 2022 **or** aged 19-24 on the 31st August 2022 with an Education Health Care plan, prior to starting the 2-year programme in the 2022-23 academic year.
- The learner must be able to provide complete and sufficient evidence of their household income being less than £28,000 per year, before tax and deductions

Learners who are eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary, could receive up to £1,200 per academic year. This does not mean they will receive the full £1,200 per academic year, but they will be assessed given their financial needs and will receive payments up to the value of £1,200. If there are exceptional circumstances and their financial needs exceed £1,200, this can be provided via the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund. Learners aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

- The vulnerable groups are defined as
 - Learners in care
 - Learners who are care leavers
 - Learners who are 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.
 - Learners who are 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.

Eligibility for Free Meals is defined as if the learner is 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 Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (UC) with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 for each year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)

More information/guidance can be found via the Free Meals Guide linked in appendices below

2.4 Supporting Evidence

The evidence required relates to the learners' personal circumstance at the time of their Student Financial Support application. The evidence required is outlined as part of the application process and via the application form due to the many variations of personal circumstances.

2.5 Application & Process

The Student Financial Support application is a digital form, which asks the learner relevant information relating to themselves, their course, their household situation/income as well as if they live with anyone else. The application adapts based on the learners' answers to questions. As part of the application, learners must upload the relevant information/evidence. Only fully submitted applications with evidence will be processed. If any information/evidence is missing, learners will be contacted via their student Gmail account.

Once an application has been submitted the College aims to process the application within 15 working days from the date the learner's application was fully submitted (all supporting evidence supplied). A member of the Student Financial Support department will then complete a full assessment and consider all funding requests.

Once approved for funding and processed, the learner will be given a breakdown of expected payments and payment dates for ongoing support. All assistance is at the discretion of the Student Financial Support department. The college's allocation of the 16-19 Bursary Fund will be dispensed fairly. There is no guarantee that all claims will be successful or to the desired level.

2.6 Payments

- Payments are made via BACS, there are exceptions to this depending on the financial support awarded; for example, some equipment expenses may be paid directly to the curriculum area or supplier.
- Learners must apply using bank details in their own name; only in an exceptional circumstance can the College process details in another person's name.
- Payments can only be made into standard current accounts; Savings account and Post Office details cannot be processed.
- The Student Financial Support department release payment on Wednesdays, with payments usually depositing into learner accounts on Fridays. This is subject to change and amendments throughout the academic year. Please speak to the Student Financial Support team for an up-to-date list of expected payment dates.
- All payments must be processed before 5pm the day prior to release. All payments take 2 working days to clear in the learner's account.

2.7 Conditions

- All financial support provided is at the discretion of the college and works on a 'first come, first served' basis
- Travel and bursary payments require the learner to maintain a minimum attendance of 87% each month. Should the percentage fall below this, payment will be withheld.
- Payments can be withheld if the learner does not maintain good punctuality, behaviour and continue to make good progress on all programmes of study.
- Any missed or outstanding payments will not be processed after the deadline date. A list of deadline dates is available from the Student Financial Support department.
- The Student Financial Support department has a right to refuse discussion of an application, or agreed funding, over the telephone unless the learner is present and can answer all security questions to the staff member's satisfaction.
- The Student Financial Support department have a zero-tolerance policy towards abusive, violent, rude and threatening behaviour. The Student Financial Support department has the right to refuse support to a learner if they or a family member/friend show any of these signs.
- Support awarded is only valid for that academic year/current length of enrolment. If the learner re-enrols during the year, it is their responsibility to inform a member of the Student Financial Support team, and must be aware that funding is subject to availability and is not guaranteed.
- If a learner has applied for funding using an account that is not their own, the college cannot be held responsible for any payment complications where the department is not at fault.

- All issues relating to attendance must be taken up with the college tutors. It is not the responsibility of the Student Financial Support department to provide any information other than overall monthly percentage data.
- Support awarded is based on actual attendance in college, Distance learning will not qualify for payments. This may include periods of suspension and early completion.

2.8 Appeals Procedure

If a learner's application has been rejected, they have the right to appeal this decision within 3 months of the application. After 3 months they will have to submit a new application.

In the first instance, should an applicant be dissatisfied with the outcome of their application, they can put in an appeal in writing to the Student Financial Support Team Leader on email Student.FinanceSupport@bdc.ac.uk

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the initial appeal response from the Student Financial Support Team Leader they may escalate their appeal to the Head of Admissions & Onboarding for a final outcome.

3 Scope

The 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy applies to all learners who apply for support via the Student Financial Support team and meet the entry requirements set out in section 2.3.

4 Definitions

ESFA: Education & Skills Funding Agency

5 Review

This policy will be periodically monitored in light of legislative, regulatory, codifiable of necessary changes, and in any event formally reviewed, and revised, if necessary, on an annual basis in July/August.

6 Linked Policies

Please read this in conjunction with the following policies.

- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy

7 Appendices

Funding Regulations for Post-16 provision: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision-2023-to-2024>

Care to Learn: <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/overview>

16-19 ESFA Bursary Fund Guide: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year>

Free Meals Guide: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year>