Barking & Dagenham College

19+ Learner Support Funds Policy

Policy Author:	Head of Admissions & Onboarding	Date of Approval:	October 2025
Approved By:	SLT Policy Committee	Reviewed:	Annually

OUR VISION

To be an exceptional college

OUR MISSION

Empowering futures, transforming lives

OUR CULTURE AND VALUES

Barking & Dagenham College is a unique, diverse and inclusive environment in which everyone is supported to grow, develop and really flourish.

We treat each student as an individual because we know that everyone is different. Every individual has their own unique talents, circumstances, challenges and aspirations. Every student brings something special and it is this diversity and richness of ideas that makes College life interesting, fun and vibrant. Our culture is such that all students, staff and visitors should feel welcome, safe and valued. Guided by our principles of honesty, integrity and transparency, we treat each other respectfully and seek to establish trust. By building resilience and confidence, we encourage students and staff to rise above challenges with determination and a positive mindset.

Whilst we are rightly proud of our unique internal culture, Barking & Dagenham College is an outward facing organisation that recognises the critical importance of working through networks and collaboration to lead change and influence local agendas. By partnering with industry-leading employers and embracing innovation, digital technologies and new ways of thinking, we strive to push the boundaries of learning and ensure that our students are ahead of the curve. Our many stakeholder partnerships mean that we have established our place at the heart of our community and as a key partner in the regeneration of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

At Barking & Dagenham College, we are dedicated to inspiring students and staff to embrace challenges and pursue their dreams with confidence. Most of all, we are ambitious and we expect excellence - from ourselves and from our students.

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1 Introduction / Context

This 19+ Learner Support Funds Policy outlines the College's policy for managing the 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund and Advanced Learner Loan Support Fund for students on 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, 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 19+ Discretionary Support Funding

The funding issued is based on the guidance's published by the Department for Education (DfE) and Greater London Authority (GLA) 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, childcare 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. 19+ Discretionary Support Fund
2. Advanced Learner Loan (A.L.L) Support 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 learners' tutor to be considered for this funding; awards will be made in kind and/or via a third party where possible. Requests for this are completed online through the students PayMyStudent account and students are required to provide receipts/proof of purchase before support can be considered.
- Travel expenses – Learners must live over 1.5 miles from their college campus. Each payment is then awarded based on the student maintaining a minimum 95% attendance for the previous month. Receipts may be requested at various points throughout the year to provide evidence of travel costs. 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.
- External registration fees e.g. DBS - A separate request form must be completed by the learners tutor to be considered for this funding. Requests for this are completed online through the students Pay My Student account and students are required to provide receipts/proof of purchase before support can be considered
- 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.
- College 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. This is paid at £5.00 per meal. This is where the College will provide payments towards College Meals, not Free Meals. Receipts may be requested at various points throughout the year to provide evidence of travel costs. Learners must **maintain a minimum 95% attendance for the previous month.**
- Childcare – Childcare is paid in relation to the days/times learners are required at College/Placement/Work Experience. Learners must **maintain a minimum 85% attendance for the previous month.** Childcare can only be offered to Ofsted registered providers and support is paid directly to the provider Childcare – Childcare is paid in relation to the days/times learners are required at College/Placement/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

19+ Discretionary Support Fund

- The learner must have a current enrolment for the current academic year.
- The learner must be eligible for and funded via the DfE/GLA for their course, using either the Department for Education Adult Skills Fund / Greater London Authority Adult Skills Fund 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 19+ on the 31st August 2025.
- If the learner is on a 2 year programme. The learner must be aged 19+ on the 31st August 2024, prior to starting the 2 year programme in the 2024-25 academic year.
- The learner must be able to provide complete and sufficient evidence of their income being less then £30,000 per year, before tax and deductions

Advanced Learner Loan Support Fund

- The learner must have a current enrolment for the current academic year.
- The learner must be eligible for and funded via an Advanced Learner Loan using the Department for Education Adult Skills Fund
- 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 19+ on the 31st August 2025.
- If the learner is on a 2 year programme. The learner must be aged 19+ on the 31st August 2024, prior to starting the 2 year programme in the 2024-25 academic year.
- The learner must be able to provide complete and sufficient evidence of their income being less then £30,000 per year, before tax and deductions.

Learners in receipt of 19+ Learner Support Funds will not be disadvantaged financially where attendance is affected by characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. The only exceptions to are hospital, court/legal appointments or situations outside of their control which are accepted to be immovable. These cases will only be considered on production of formal notification of the appointment. Learners must liaise with their SAM (Support and Achievement Mentor) or Curriculum Manager who will submit an appeal via the agreed/approved appeal method as set out by the Student Financial Support Team Leader and Head of Admissions & Onboarding. A photocopy of this documentation (or the original) must be attached/uploaded to the appeal. Where an exception is approved, the appropriate register mark/s will be amended to B (Bursary). This remains a negative attendance mark for all attendance related reporting (as the learner was not in learner at this time), but will be counted as a positive in relation to Bursary attendance calculations, thus not disadvantaging the learner.

If a learner is 16-18 or 19+ but have an EHCP, they should apply under the 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy, not the 19+ Learner Support Funds Policy.

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.

Learners who apply for Childcare support will require their Childcare provider to complete a confirmation form, detailing their details including, but not limited to, Company Name, Ofsted Registration Number, days, times, and a breakdown of fees they charge in relation to childcare for this learners child/children.

2.5 Application & Process

The Student Financial Support application is a digital form via the PayMyStudent Portal (https://bdc.paymystudent.com/portal/), which asks the learner relevant information relating to themselves, their course, their 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 and provided with a deadline to provide the missing information/evidence.

Once an application has been submitted via the PayMyStudent Portal, the College aims to process the application within 25 working days from the date the learners 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/support and payment dates for ongoing support. All assistance is at the discretion of the Student Financial Support department. The college's allocation of the 19+ Learner Support Funds 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.
- Childcare payments are made directly to the Childcare Provider, not the learner.
- 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 3 working days to clear in the learner's account.
- Where financial monitoring indicates impending exhaustion of funds, the college reserves the right to readjust award value

2.7 Conditions

- All financial support provided is at the discretion of the college and works on a 'first come, first served' basis
- College Meal payments require the learner to maintain a minimum attendance of 95% 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. A copy will also be sent alongside a payment schedule in the students' acceptance email.
- 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 approach 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 academic year or current length of enrolment (whichever is less). 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 the learner enrols again for a new academic year, they will need to submit a new application. No application is carried over multiple academic years.
- 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 or the learners Support and Achievement mentor. 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.
- Once approved, eligible payments will be released once a learner has past their "Qualifying Period", for majority of courses this is 42 days after their start date.

2.8 Appeals Procedure

If a learners application has been rejected, they have the right to appeal this decision within 90 days of the application. After 90 days they will have to submit a new application. Similarly if a learner would like to appeal support granted they have the right to appeal this decision within 90 days of the application.

In the first instance, should an applicant be dissatisfied with the outcome of their application/amount of support granted, they can put in an appeal in writing to the Student Financial Support Team Leader or alternatively email SFSAppeals@bdc.ac.uk.

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the initial appeal response from the Student Financial Support Team Leader, they may

3 Scope

The 19+ Learner Support Funds 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

DfE: Department for Education
GLA: Greater London Authority

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 & Punctuality Policy
- Promoting Positive Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy
- Admissions Policy

7 Appendix

DfE ASF 2025/26 Guidance: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-skills-fund-funding-rules/adult-skills-fund-funding-rules-2025-to-2026#Learner_support
GLA ASF 2025/26 Guidance: https://www.london.gov.uk/media/109715/download?attachment

8 Amendments

Complete table below showing any amendments made from the previous policy Delete this table if you are submitting a new or policy or is not required

Amendments to Existing Policy

Amendments Made	Page Number	Line/Section Number	Made by	Date
Updates throughout to replace ESFA to DfE	*throughout*		*Alex Cohen*	*01/09/2025*
Updates throughout to replace Digital Form to PayMyStudent System	*throughout*		*Alex Cohen*	*01/09/2025*
Additions to 2.2	*¾*	*2.2*	*Alex Cohen*	*01/09/2025*
Clarification provided on Appeals	*6*	*2.8*	*Alex Cohen*	*01/09/2025*
Document Formatting Updated to meet Accessibility Standards	All Pages	All Sections	Martyn Merridew	04.08.2026