

## 16-19 Bursary Fund and Free School Meals Policy and Guidance (for 2026/27)

### What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a government funded scheme intended to help support those young people who face the greatest financial barriers to continuing in education or training after age 16. Individual colleges are free to establish their own assessment and award criteria within broad guidelines set out by the government. The main restriction is that the funds must be used to assist with costs directly associated with attending college and cannot be used to support a student's general living costs. Colleges receive a fixed sum of money each year to allocate to students which can mean that the amount of financial support an individual student receives may vary from year to year, depending on the number of qualifying applications that are received.

### Who qualifies for a Bursary?

Students should be eligible to receive a bursary if they are aged under 19 on 31 August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study and they fall into one (or both) of the two categories of bursaries;

- Vulnerable Bursary – bursaries for defined vulnerable groups are assessed based on financial need to support participation at the college, such as transport costs, meals, or equipment
- Discretionary Bursary – discretionary bursaries awarded to meet individual needs such as transport costs, meals or equipment and assessed based on household income
- Discretionary Bursary - Trips or laptop only. This type of bursary may be awarded to students who are just above the bursary limit but have expressed concern regarding their ability to pay for educational trips and visits or provide a laptop for their use in college.

Vulnerable Bursary	Discretionary Bursary
<p>Any student who is: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in care</li> <li>• a care leaver</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<p>A student who lives in a household where the gross annual household income is <b>£36,000</b> or less may be entitled to assistance from the fund. Although this income limit does not preclude other students from applying for assistance as each families' circumstances will be looked at as an individual case.</p> <p>We make an allowance for the number of children in a household and also remove some benefits from the household income where they do not relate to the student e.g. if a parent is in receipt of personal independence benefits or benefits specifically for another child.</p> <p>The amount of Bursary provided will be confirmed following the application.</p> <p>S6C will award bursary based on an assessment of circumstances and actual need.</p>

### How to apply for a Bursary?

Applications are made online using the link on the college website  
<https://www.salisbury6c.ac.uk/study-with-us/bursary/>

For vulnerable bursaries students need to supply evidence of their status such as written confirmation from the Local Authority (in the case of a care leaver) or evidence of universal credit/disability allowances payable in their own right.

Students will need to supply clear evidence of **household income** before a discretionary bursary can be awarded.

If for any reason you are unable to upload the evidence of your family household income, please send a copy of the evidence to [office@s6c.mlp.college](mailto:office@s6c.mlp.college) clearly stating the student to whom the evidence relates.

In exceptional circumstances, the Pastoral Team will make a bursary recommendation to the Head of College without further evidence, based on their knowledge of the student's circumstances or as a result of a welfare need for a meal.

All applications will be treated as confidential, and the College will adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation in its handling of your application.

### What can the Bursary pay for?

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is intended to assist students in meeting the costs associated with attending College. It cannot fund general living expenses. Assistance can be requested with any of the following;

- transport costs between Home and College
- lunches in the College cafeteria
- a laptop
- the cost of visits, field trips etc. which form an essential part of courses
- the cost of stationery, printing, books or other materials
- we may be able to assistance with other costs related to studies not included in this list

**Please note that no optional activities such as enrichment activities or overseas trips will be paid for from bursary.**

Bursary will usually be given as 'benefit in kind' as the College can take advantage of education discounts to buy items and is able to reclaim VAT. For this reason, we would ask students not to purchase items themselves. Direct payments and reimbursements to students will only be made in rare and exceptional circumstances. Once students are awarded a bursary, the online bursary system will allow them to request items such as bus tickets, books and materials and will keep a record of the amount of the award they have used.

Not all categories are relevant to all students. For example, some students may walk to college and therefore do not need assistance with transport costs but would find some assistance with the cost of materials or buying food from the College cafeteria helpful.

### **How much is the Bursary?**

Under the current rules of the scheme students who qualify for the Vulnerable Bursary may receive a bursary of up to £1,200 per year based on a financial needs assessment and the amount of support required to participate at the College.

There is the possibility the award may be limited or assessed as not required.

Amounts paid to students qualifying for the Discretionary Bursary can vary from year to year depending on the amount of funding the College receives, the number of applicants and their individual needs. Our aim is to try to allocate the funds we have as fairly as possible and linked to individual needs. Receipt of both categories of bursary in full is dependent on agreed standards of attendance and behaviour. For many students the biggest cost and barrier to attending College is the cost of transport. We will, therefore, be prioritising help with transport costs and our aim is to meet these costs in full for qualifying students, wherever possible.

### **When can you apply?**

You can apply at any time from July onwards for the next academic year. We will accept applications throughout the year (particularly if your financial circumstances change), but we cannot guarantee that funds will still be available for applications received later in the year.

Students need to apply for bursary and supply evidence for each year of their programme or a signed declaration that their circumstances have not changed since their original application.

### **What if an application is turned down?**

You have the right to appeal. You should put your case in writing and address it to the Head of College at the College address. Any appeal must be made within seven working days of being advised of the decision. The Head of College's decision is final.

### **Can the Bursary be Stopped?**

If a student does not meet the minimum standards of attendance and behaviour in the college, bursary may be withdrawn.

### **Free School Meals**

From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, all students from households in receipt of Universal Credit will be entitled to receive a free meal from the College Cafe. This takes the form of £3 worth of credit to use in the cafe per day attending the College.

To receive free meals from the start of the academic year, students need to apply through the 16 - 19 bursary system, providing a copy of the relevant Universal Credit Statement, HMRC or DWP award letter. Free meal status will not automatically roll forward and eligibility for a free meal will need to be confirmed by the student/parent at the beginning of each academic year. From 2026 to 2027 all transitional arrangements cease.

There are 3 categories of free meal in the College;

Targeted FSM - which continues to be based on the existing threshold, covering pupils who are in households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of no more than £7,400.

Expanded FSM - covering pupils who do not qualify for targeted FSM, but who are in households receiving Universal Credit .

Discretionary FSM - provided from the 16-19 bursary fund, where a student does not qualify for either of the above, but the College assesses there is a pastoral need.