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**16-19 Student Bursary Fund Policy**

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16-19 Student Bursary Fund Policy

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

The fund is made available from the government through its funding body – Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for 16–19-year old's – to provide financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

**There are two types of 16-19 bursaries:**

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| Full bursary: for defined vulnerable groups (up to £1,200 per year) | You could get this if you are in one of the following categories: You are living in care, or have recently left living in care You, the learner, are receiving income support in your name You, the learner, are disabled and receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Income Support. |
| Level 2: discretionary bursary Allocated to meet the individual needs of the learner, for example meals, college trips and equipment.  | You could receive this level of funding if: Your annual household income is below £40,000 or Your household is in receipt of other income-based means tested benefits. |

For all bursaries, students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2024 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2024 to 2025 academic year. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 at the Communications Specialist College. Students must also meet the residency criteria in the ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision.

Once you have applied, the College will assess your application in line with the eligibility criteria set out here and will let you know if your application has been successful. If your application is successful, you will be issued with an award letter confirming the amount and type of support you have been awarded and setting out any payment conditions. Rather than paying money into your bank account, the college may decide to provide some or all your award as ‘in kind’ support – this means that they will purchase the resources you require, such as a bus pass or books, on your behalf. Students who meet the criteria for bursaries for vulnerable groups are not entitled to a bursary if they do not have financial needs and/or their financial needs are covered from other sources. All applications will be treated in strict confidence.

Your application should be submitted by 20th October 2024. Students will be notified as soon as possible of the outcome. A level 1 bursary will be paid directly into the learners account in several installments throughout the academic year.

Conditions

The College reserves the right to withhold the bursary if students fail to meet expectations for attendance and behavior. Please be aware that the College will stop any payments where a student has been absent for a period of four continuous weeks, their overall attendance for the academic year falls under 85% and where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme. Where the College purchases books or equipment, students may be asked to return these at the end of their study programme. On other occasions, the college may insist bursary payments are spent only on the support identified as necessary to help a student participate in education. These details will be specified in the student’s award letter. Please note that when you apply for a bursary you are asked to confirm that the evidence you have provided is correct and complete to the best of your knowledge and belief. Supporting documentation must also be provided to establish financial need, as set out in the application forms below. Giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect/overpayment may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered. This might also result in a referral to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their family facing prosecution. You must inform the college in writing if, after you are awarded a bursary, there is any material change in your personal or financial circumstances. All information submitted by students will be treated in confidence and held securely.

Assessment Criteria

The College follows the ESFA’s guidance in relation to eligibility criteria, and as part of that conducts a financial assessment of all applicant students. The evidence you will need to provide in relation to each bursary is clearly set out in the relevant application form. The college is looking to establish that you are in financial need and, in relation to the discretionary bursary, that you are in need of specific items or services relating to your education that you would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate. The college bases its decisions in relation to both types of bursary award on students’ individual circumstances and actual financial need. Awards will vary from student to student and will depend on, for example, household income, requirements of the study programme, distance required to travel to college and available transport options, the number of dependent children within a student’s household, relevant participation needs, and any other relevant home circumstances.

Complaints

Any student or parent unhappy with the college’s application for bursary funding should contact Joanne Ellis (Pastoral Manager).

Exceptional Circumstances

The college recognises that it is not possible to cover every eventuality in this policy. In exceptional circumstances, students and parents / carers may apply in writing to Joanne Ellis, Pastoral Manager, for a discretionary bursary. Such applications should outline the specific circumstances and provide supporting documentation. A decision will be taken by the Bursary Committee at the sole discretion of the college, and it will be dependent on funds being available.