

## Student Financial Support Policy and Guidance 2023-24

The Sixth Form receives the following funding from the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to support students:

- Further Education Free Meals Fund
- 16-18 Bursary Fund
- 19+ Hardship Fund

This funding is to support eligible students studying further education courses funded by the ESFA. The ESFA Guidance related to these funding streams states how the funds should be allocated and prioritised. The allocation of funds is linked to the individual needs of the students which will be assessed by the answers given in the *Student Eligibility and Evidence* section of the **online** Free Meals and Student Bursary Application Form.

The student is expected to use the funds to support the following, where these are not normally provided by The Sixth Form:

- A daily meal/drink to the value of £3.25 per day
- Travel costs to/from The Sixth Form, work placements, trips and visits and sporting activities
- Examination Re-sit fees (in accordance with the Re-sit Policy)
- Essential uniforms and specialist clothing
- Specialist course equipment and text books/publications (excluding stationery)
- Specialist training costs provided by external organisations e.g. first aid qualifications
- DBS clearance checks where required for course related work placements
- Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) applications
- Courses that are externally delivered and certified
- Specialist tuition provided by external organisations e.g. music instrument teachers
- Costs associated with course related trips/visits e.g. hotel accommodation, venue entry charges (this does not include the cost of meals/drinks unless the student is eligible for Free Meals in which case funding will be provided to the value of £3.25 per day)
- Any costs associated with work placement/experience including travel, specialist clothing and meals/drinks organised by The Sixth Form

### Further Education Free Meals Fund

To be eligible for a daily free meal, the student or their parent/guardian/carer must be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Universal Credit (UC) with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa (*after tax and not including any benefits they get*)
- Income related Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of the State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have annual gross income of no more than £16,190 as assessed by HMRC)
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for 4 weeks after stopping qualifying for Working Tax Credit

### Application Process

**Students are required to complete the Student Free Meals / Bursary Application Form via the Student Portal.** As part of this process, you must upload and submit the correct evidence detailed above e.g. an award notice or letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or the HMRC.

**Students who are continuing with their study programme at The Sixth Form Bolton and received Free Meals in academic year 2022-23, will need to complete a declaration form via the Student Portal, to receive Free Meals in 2023-24.**

### Method by Which Support Provided

On each day a student is studying at The Sixth Form they will be entitled to food/drinks obtained from the roof top restaurant or ground floor café, to the value of £3.25. Whilst on related work placements or trips/visits (organised by The Sixth Form) each student will be provided with the appropriate funds to obtain food/drinks.

## 16-18 Bursary Fund

The 16-18 Bursary Fund is broken down into 3 priority groups as follows:

### Priority Group 1 – Guaranteed Bursary

To be eligible for a Guaranteed Bursary **the student** must be aged under 19 on the 31 August 2023 and meet one of the criteria below:

- In care or care leaver
- In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit
- In receipt of both Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

### Application Process

Students are required to provide one or more of the following documentations to Student Information / Finance:

- A letter from the Local Authority Children's Services confirming "Looked After" or "leaving Care" status
- Letter from the Benefits Agency confirming receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit
- Letter from the Benefits Agency confirming Employment Support Allowance and Disabled Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments

### Support Provided

Each student is guaranteed a bursary of £1,200 per 36-week course (or pro rata for shorter courses or students who start late) Payments are made weekly in arrears by direct transfer to the student's bank account. Weekly payments of £30 are made with the remainder being paid at the end of the academic year.

### Priority Group 2 – Discretionary 16-18 Bursary

To be eligible for funding from the 16-18 discretionary bursary, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be under 19 yrs old on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023
- Be in receipt of the benefits described under the Further Education Free Meals Fund (**excluding Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999**) or
- To be in receipt of any benefit such as Working Tax Credit which shows that the income doesn't exceed £35,000
- Have a combined "Household Income" below £35,000 (Household Income relates to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student)

### Application Process

Students are required to complete the Student Free Meals / Bursary Application Form via the Student Portal. As part of this process, you must upload and submit the correct evidence detailed below –

- Evidence of any of the qualifying benefits detailed above e.g. an award notice or letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or the HMRC
- In order to prove combined household income:
  - Most recent P60 and two recent payslips for the parent/guardian or carers of the student
  - For self-employed individuals, end of year Business Account or Tax Credit Award Notice if preferred
  - Working Tax Credit evidence can also be used to establish household income providing the income doesn't exceed £35,000

Students who are continuing with their study programme at The Sixth Form Bolton and received Discretionary Bursary in academic year 2022-23, will need to complete a declaration form via the Student Portal, to receive Discretionary Bursary in 2023-24.

### Method by Which Support Provided

- A weekly payment that will be *determined by the needs of the student*, paid directly into the nominated bank account

I understand that I am expected to maintain 100% attendance at The Sixth Form and my Student Bursary / Travel Grant may be stopped if I fail to do so. I also understand that any unauthorised absences will stop my weekly payment. I also understand that my Student Bursary may be stopped for other reason that are determined by The Sixth Form. All the above funding awards are subject to funding availability. Students are expected to notify The Sixth Form if their reasons for eligibility change and they no longer meet the eligibility criteria.

### **Priority Group 3 – Discretionary 16-18 Bursary Emergency Payments**

Students may be eligible to receive emergency payments, this will be at the discretion of The Sixth Form.

#### **Types of Support**

The funds can be used to support the following:

- Severe financial hardship due to a domestic emergency

#### **Application Process**

Students are required to complete an Emergency Bursary Application Form and return this to the Student Information.

#### **Method by Which Support Provided**

Financial assistance will be agreed on an exceptional basis with the Deputy Principal. Funding is provided on a case by case basis and each case does not set a precedent for other applications.

### **19+ Hardship Fund**

Students who do not meet the age criteria for the 16-18 Bursary may still be entitled to the same support. Students must complete the Student Free Meals / Bursary Application Form, providing the same evidence and they will be notified of the support they are eligible to receive.