**Bursary and Free College Meals**

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| James Gould | Reviewed: July 2023  Next Review: July 2025 |



Sir George Monoux College |

2023

# 1. Bursary and Free College Meals Application Process

The government provides funding to schools, academies, FE colleges, sixth-form colleges, training providers, independent specialist providers and local authorities for ‘disadvantaged’ students within their establishments. This is to help with retention in that these students may not otherwise be able to successfully complete their further education studies if financial assistance were not given.

## Application and Assessment

At the commencement of each new term of the academic year students will be able to apply for the 16-19 Bursary and Free College Meals by completing an online application form.

Students will need to submit relevant evidence to the SIC:

* Parent income details (Appendix 8.1 – income list)
* A signed parent/carer declaration (Appendix 8.2)
* Student bank statement

Returning students that have previously received the Bursary and Free College meals will not need to apply again but they will need to provide a signed parent/carer declaration that their details have not changed (unless these details have changed, in which case new details must be provided).

A deadline for new applications and declarations will be advertised via the App, on the screens around the college and during induction. Text messages will be sent to students as a constant reminder. Support will also be given on completing application forms via Talent Lab sessions.

# 2. Eligibility Criteria (16-19)

Bursary and Free College Meal applications will be assessed on the basis of 16-19 Bursary Funding guidelines as per the guidance at [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2023 to 2024 academic year - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](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#eligibility-criteria-bursaries-for-young-people-in-defined-vulnerable-groups)

Vulnerable Bursary.

A Bursary of £1,200 per year will be paid to the following groups of students as per the guidance above (click link for further details):

* in care
* care leavers
* receiving Income Support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) 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
* receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right

Mainstream/Discretionary Bursary.

A student can apply for a Discretionary Bursary Award if they:

* Live in a household where total income (including employment/self-employment) was below **£26,000 for the tax year 2023/24**. This income excludes benefits *(evidence required)*
* Students who have been assessed as having exceptional circumstances can be awarded with either a full or discretionary payment by submitting a special consideration form to the Vice Principal, Student Services. Due consideration will be given to elements such as number of siblings, caring responsibilities in the family or other circumstances. This form may also be submitted in situations where evidence of household income is unobtainable, or there are Safeguarding reasons where the parent/carer cannot be contacted.
* Students who are eligible for the bursary, but not Free College Meals can apply to request that Free College Meals are provided from the bursary fund.
* Students who have No Recourse to Public Funds, or who are otherwise ineligible for the bursary due to their immigration status can make an application for a charitable donation from the Drapers Company funds.

## Financial Criteria for Free College Meals (14-16)

There is no bursary for students who are aged 14-16. Pupils can still apply for Free College Meals if they have been referred as part of the Accelerated Learning Pathway contract from Waltham Forest Council. The College uses the [national regulation on Free School Meals](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1133262/Free_school_meals.pdf) as a guide to assess suitability. However, the funding is administered from the Local Authority as part of our contract. As such, we can apply more flexibility in meeting the criteria.

Parents/carers must confirm and provide evidence that they meet one or more of the following criteria:

* Income Support
* income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
* income-related Employment and Support Allowance
* support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
* the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
* Child Tax Credit (provided you’re not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
* Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
* Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
* No Recourse to Public Funds

All students in care, or otherwise considered to be vulnerable, can also be authorised to access Free College Meals by any member of SLT.

An allowance of £2.41 a day will be contributed from the bursary fund and used to purchase food in the college canteen.

## Attendance Criteria

Students are expected to maintain an attendance of **90% and above** during the academic year to receive payments. At certain times of the year, this might change slightly at the discretion of the Vice Principal, Student Services.

# 3. Payment

All students who have been approved for the bursary will receive contributions towards educational costs. At the application stage students will be assessed and placed into payment bands to determine the type and level of contributions to be made. These are as follows:

#### Band 1- annual household income of £16,000 or less.

* Contribution towards travel if they have over a 90-minute commute each way and demonstrate that they cannot otherwise travel to college. Monthly contributions towards travel costs will be awarded and these will be paid regardless of attendance.
* Contribution towards educational visits during the year
* Contribution towards the cost of university interview, Medicine, or Oxbridge support.
* Contribution towards work placement travel
* Contribution towards equipment
* Emergency cash payment (one per term). In rare circumstances, students may receive more than one emergency cash payment per term if agreed by a member of SLT. However, this would need to need to be alongside a long-term strategy for supporting the student.

#### Band 2 – annual household income between £16,000 and £26,000.

* Contribution towards travel if they have over a 90 minute commute each way and demonstrate that they cannot otherwise travel to college. Monthly contributions towards travel costs will be awarded and these will be paid regardless of attendance.
* Contribution towards educational visits during the year-
* Contribution towards the cost of university interview, Medicine, or Oxbridge support.
* Contribution towards work placement travel
* Contribution towards equipment
* Emergency cash payment (one per term). In rare circumstances, students may receive more than one emergency cash payment per term if agreed by a member of SLT. However, this would need to need to be alongside a long-term strategy for supporting the student.

#### Declined bursary applications

Students whose bursary applications are declined may be assessed to determine whether a one off or continual special consideration contributions can be awarded. This may come in the form of a voucher towards equipment, support towards purchasing equipment from Pathways, lunch allowance or travel assistance.

# 4. Bursary Fund Allocation

The overall Bursary allocation for the year 2023/24 will be divided into three pots representative of the three college terms. This termly budget will then further be subdivided into contributions as presented below.

#### Main payment

This will be made on a termly basis, and is dependant on the number of students who have successfully applied for the programme, and the total funding available.

#### Exam Re-sits

In some circumstances (set out in the Assessment Policy), students may be required to pay exam fees. In these situations, students eligible for the bursary can request a contribution towards the cost of their exam re-sits and in exceptional circumstances, the full amount could be claimed. The college would not normally fund late fees through the bursary unless the late entry was as a result of the college process. Students will need to discuss their circumstances with the Vice Principal, Student Services who will decide according to the need of the student.

#### Emergency Payments

In exceptional circumstances a student can be given an emergency payment of up to £25 which can be authorised by a Senior Mentor, or any member of SLT. In the case of student emergencies requiring a payment of more than £25, a request will need to be made to a member of SLT for authorisation. No more than one emergency payment can be made per student per term. (See appendix 8.5)

#### Trips

Students who have been approved for the bursary may receive assistance towards educational trips. The member of staff arranging the trip will need to complete an application on behalf of students; the cost will then be transferred directly to the relevant department.

Monies for trips under £30 will be paid in full per student where funds allow. Where the cost of trips is in excess of £30 a percentage contribution will be made in accordance to the bursary band criteria.

***Please note: Where it has been found that a student did not attend the trip the contribution cost will be recouped from the relevant department.***

#### Laptop Loan Scheme

All students eligible for the bursary or Free College Meals will be entitled to loan a laptop for the duration of their time in college or until the college requests its return.

#### Equipment

At the application stage and throughout the academic year students will be assessed and receive support towards equipment in the following ways:

* Vouchers towards equipment to be purchased externally
* Contribution towards equipment to be purchased internally
* Equipment purchased through the bursary fund on behalf of the student

# 5. Free College Meal allocation

The government has allocated **£2.41** per student for each day that they are in college, or on work placement arranged by the college. This will be paid through a cashless system. Cash can be used to pay for the cost of food and drink where it exceeds the stated amount. Students will be informed of how the cashless system works during enrolment, upon receipt of free college meal approval and through the drop-in service.

Use of cashless card

* Students must **not** allow other students to use their cashless card. If this is permitted; funds lost cannot be reclaimed by the student or parent/carer at any point.
* If the cashless card is lost or damaged it **must** be reported immediately to reception. The cost of a new card will be £3. The allocation will then be transferred to the new card.
* The daily allocation cannot be carried over to subsequent days. If it is not used during any given day it will be lost.
* Cash can be used to top up the costs of purchases that exceed £2.41
* The free meal allocation cannot be used as payment for other items.
* Students will be given advice and support around the use of the cashless card

Students can speak to the SIC regarding any technical problems or questions in relation to the card.

# 6. Marketing and Promotion of the Bursary and Free College Meal

Bursary and Free College meal Promotions continue throughout the academic year on the Monoux App and through Entry Periods and Talent Lab .

The service also targets special college events e.g. Fresher’s Fair, Induction and Parent introductory events. Advertising dates for applications and payment dates will be sent via the App, student emails and posters throughout the college.

***Please Note:***

***The processes discussed in this document have been developed to suit the needs of the cohort of students and the resources available for the administering of the Bursary. This is subject to change and development in order that the Bursary can continue to perform its intended job in supporting students to access education.***