CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE
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16 – 19 Bursaries Policy

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Associated Policy:	• Bursary Appeals Procedure • Bursary Guidance and Eligibility

1. Introduction

1.1 Cambridge Regional College recognises that the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund has an important role to play in removing barriers for some students accessing and completing further education courses. It is the aim of the College to use funds to make the maximum impact on recruitment, attendance, retention, achievement and success rates.

1.2 The fund will be distributed in a consistent and transparent way and in accordance with the guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE). Student eligibility will be determined through assessments of the students' social and economic disadvantage.

1.3 It is the policy of the College to optimise the use of 16-19 Bursary funding to provide support to those young people facing the greatest financial barriers to continuing in education

2. Context

2.1 The bursary will be offered in the following categories:

- **Category 1 - 16 – 19 Discretionary Bursary** A bursary may be available for any student whose netannual household income does not exceed £35,000.

- **Category 2** - **16 – 19 Vulnerable Student Bursary** A bursary of up to £1,200 a year which will assessed based on the student's financial need to enable them to participate in learning, e.g. travel costs, study trips, lunches, equipment costs and other associated course costs. Students in the following groups will be eligible if enrolled and assessed as being in one of the four defined vulnerable groups:

3. Eligibility

3.1 To be eligible to receive a bursary the student must be aged 16 to under 19 on 31 August 2025 to satisfy the residency criteria in the document DfE Funding Guidance 2026/27 Funding Regulations and be enrolled on a DfE or publicly funded programme.

3.2 The following vulnerable groups will be eligible to receive a Vulnerable Bursary of up to £1,200:

- Young people in care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- Young Care leavers
- Young people in receipt of income support or the equivalent of universal Credit (UC) in their own right
- In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right

3.3 Students on waged Apprenticeships, higher education courses or in young offender institution are not eligible for 16 – 19 Bursary.

3.4 The College will make provision to deal with immediate financial assistance and crisis payments following full assessment. Students must be assessed as being eligible to receive the fund; this might be a needs assessment and not necessarily a financial assessment for emergencies or crisis.

3.5 The 16-19 Bursary is a discretionary fund and due to the limited nature of the fund, meeting the criteria does not guarantee funding. The bursary fund is income assessed and operated on a first-come, first-served basis

4. Eligibility for the Free Meal Fund

4.1 To be eligible to receive a Free Meal the student must be aged 16 to 19 on 31 August 2026. Where they reach the age of 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner.

4.2 Free Meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. For the purposes of eligibility for free meals, 'disadvantaged' is defined as students being in receipt of, or having parents/carers who are in receipt of, one of more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- All students whose families receive Universal Credit will automatically be entitled to Free College Meals under the new government eligibility change for 2026-27

The above list may be subject to change dependent on benefit changes by the Government

4.3 Students aged 19-25 and who have Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessed by the Local Authority and studying in a government funded full time course are eligible for Free Meals providing that they meet the evidenceincome criteria mentioned above.

5. Conditions and Procedures

5.1 Students who apply for the Bursary will be required to supply evidence of household income and information about their actual need for support. This should be in the form of benefit or other official documents or verification from statutory or other agencies. All bursary applications are made via the College online bursary portal Pay My Student

Students will be informed in writing via email when their application has been successful and what they will be able to claim for. For those who are unsuccessful, they will be informed in writing via email including the appeals process.

The award letter includes an expectation of 90% attendance, which is reviewed on an individual basis for vulnerable students.

5.2 Payments are subject to satisfactory attendance at College which is outlined and signed by the student in the terms of support when making the bursary application. The College reserves the right to suspend, delay or reduce payments where a student's attendance or conduct is giving cause for concern.

5.3 All payment that are made by BACS (public transport and essential approved kit/uniform refunds) are paid into the student's own bank account only.

5.5 Wherever possible, payments for essential course costs (kits, trips, uniform, material and books) will be made via internal College transfer. Funds will be sent to a supplier, where appropriate, to purchase items.

5.6 Free Meals will be awarded at the level of £4.00 per day for each day of timetabled attendance at College and funds will be uploaded to student ID badge.

5.6 Care to Learn (Government Scheme) will continue to support students under the age of 20 years for 2026/27 academic year. It provides support with the cost of childcare up to £180 per week per child. Childcare providers must meet eligibility requirements of the scheme.

5.7 Where the student's positions change during the academic year 26/27 and they become eligible as a vulnerable student, they will receive a pro-rata amount of the vulnerable student bursary entitlement, which will be from the date the student became eligible to the end of the academic year. Similarly, students will be required to disclose any change of circumstances during the year, which may affect their eligibility for assistance. If a student in receipt of assistance leaves before the completion of the course, they may be required to repay all or part of their award or return any equipment purchased with their award.

5.8 Applicants will be notified in writing, via email, of how much has been allotted to the categories they have applied for help with, including how payment will be made. All scheduled payments can be viewed by the student at any time via the College online bursary portal Pay My Student In all cases the application will be judged on its individual needs as outlined in the DfE guidelines. The amount awarded will be specific to each application.

5.9 In the case of declined bursary applications if a student is unhappy with their award decision, the procedure for appeal is outlined in the letter informing them that the application has been unsuccessful

5.10 Payments are authorised from the month the application is correctly completed by the student and approved by the Bursary Coordinator/Student Advice and Safeguarding Team. Any requests for back payments will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Student Advice and Safeguarding Manager. There will be no back payments prior to the start of term the application was correctly completed by the student and approved by the Student Advice and Safeguarding Team

6. Responsibilities

This policy is the responsibility of the Director of Student Services

7. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

7.1 This policy will be reviewed annually

7.2 Activity and budgets are reviewed monthly by the Senior Management Team.

7.3 The Director of Student Services and Student Advice & Safeguarding Manager should report, where possible through their SAR, the impact of the Bursary on student retention and achievement.

Document history

Date	Issue number	Change/Comments	Date Approved	Approved by
05/02/2019	1	Free meals amount changed from £3.41 to £2.41 to the correct amount	5/2/19	Emily Bennett.
29/5/2020	2	Review of document		Gayle Brown.
29/7/2021	3	Review of document		Gayle Brown
08/07/2022	4	Free School Meal allowance increased to £2.60. Eligibility criteria increased to £30,000 per annum Roles and responsibilities updated		Emily Bennett
12/05/2023	5	Annual review of existing document and changes		Kayleigh Horn and Jack Jesson
01/08/2024	6	Review of document		Jack Jesson
02/06/2025	7	Review the document	8/8/2025	Director of Student Services
04/11/2026	8	ESFA changed to DfE Changes made to FCM under government new scheme for households in receipt of universal credit Increased eligibility criteria household income to net £35,000	04/11/2026	Director of Student Services

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Contact Us

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