

16-19 Student Financial Support Procedure

2025-2026 Academic Year



TO BE A BEACON OF **EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**,
TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF THE **INDIVIDUALS**
AND **COMMUNITIES** WE SERVE.

16-19 Student Financial Support Procedure

Overview

This document provides an overview of the financial support available to students at Salford City College Group (SCC Group), including students studying with our delivery partners.

This document does not apply to students studying on the SCC Group Community Education Provision.

This document is guided by the 2024 – 2025 funding guidance from the Education & Skills Funding Agency:

- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide
- Free Meals in Further Education Fund Guide

Dates and Deadlines

The deadline for bursary applications and the submission of evidence for students who enrolled at the College in September 2025 is Thursday 23rd October 2025. (Applications received after this date will be approved on a case-by-case basis).

Applicants are advised to submit their bursary applications and evidence prior to Friday 4th July 2025 to ensure that their applications are approved prior to enrolment in August.

16 – 19 Student Financial Support

1. Summary

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups.
- Discretionary bursaries which institutions award using policies they set, in line with the funding rules.

Bursary funding is to help eligible students with costs such as travel to and from college to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example) that are required for their study programme. These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to support costs not related to education (living costs), extracurricular or non-compulsory activities or to provide learning support – services that institutions give to students – such as counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring.

2. Assessing Actual Needs

As outlined by the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide, SCC Group must assess the actual needs of all individual students in addition to eligibility when awarding bursary funding. Therefore, we must award each student support based on their actual participation needs.

Both types of 16 to 19 bursary funding (discretionary and vulnerable groups) are designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation they face. Therefore, students are only eligible to receive bursary funding to support the actual costs they incur to enable them to participate.

2.1 Household Income Checking

SCC Group is responsible for ensuring that students are eligible for the discretionary bursary. In line with the 16 to 19 Bursary Funding Guide, this process will take place once, upon receipt on an application, per study programme.

In order to confirm income eligibility, students are required to sign an electronic self-declaration annually in order to confirm that their household circumstances have not changed.

3. Emergency Meals Support

In cases where we consider a student to be in severe hardship (a student which is considered to be in real need), the College reserves the right to authorise meal support on the days that the student attends their study programme without undertaking the checks on household income or gathering other evidence that would normally be required.

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This support must be requested from the Head of Student Operations by the appropriate Head of Pastoral Studies.

For audit purposes, the following information **must** be retained by the Student Services Team:

- A record of the number of students supported in this way.
- The number of days this support is given.
- The £'s value of the support given to each student.
- The rationale for the meal support.
- Receipts to support expenditure on food or signed confirmation by the student of receipt of funding to be spent on food that day. This is recorded in the College's information management systems.

This arrangement **must** not continue on an ongoing basis for any individual student and **must** remain a short-term arrangement.

It is expected that this support will only apply to a very small number of the total 16 to 19 student cohort.

4. Eligibility Criteria (all bursaries)

Students must meet the age and residency criteria which follow to be eligible for help from the bursary fund.

4.1 Age

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on the 31st August 2025 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2025 to 2026 academic year, except for the following exceptions:

- Students aged 19 or over are eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers)
- Students that have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

These two groups of aged 19+ students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues, and SCC Group considers that the student needs the financial support to continue their participation. Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

The Education & Skills Funding Agency advises that SCC Group should only pay bursaries to students aged 16 or over. However, in exceptional circumstances where under 16 students are on funded 16 to 19 study programmes, the College may exercise discretion to pay bursaries to younger students. For example, where a student is following an accelerated study programme.

Students aged under 19 enrolled on higher education qualifications are not eligible for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

4.2 Eligible Education Provision

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Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (for example Ofsted). The provision must also fall into one of these groups:

- Funded directly by the Education & Skills Funding Agency, or by the Education & Skills Funding Agency via the Local Authority.
- Otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the Education & Skills Funding Agency list of qualifications approved for funding (<https://www.qualifications.education.gov.uk>).

Students on apprenticeship programmes, any waged training, are employed, rather than in education are not eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

Non-employed students aged 16-19 who are participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme are eligible to receive the bursary in the same way as any other student participating in an eligible, publicly funded course.

4.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision>).

4.4 Accompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)

Generally, asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum-seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. If they are destitute, they can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials, but they are not eligible for other income.

As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused, SCC Group can provide in-kind student support such as books, equipment or a travel pass. **Under no circumstances can SCC Group give cash to any asylum seeker unless they are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC).**

4.4 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the Local Authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups ('in care' group) if they have a financial need).

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, the College must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour, the Local Authority must provide them with the same support services as they do care leavers. As such, they continue to be eligible for a bursary as a student from a vulnerable group until they reach the upper age limit.

Where an asylum claim is not supported, the College will review the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide for further clarification.

5. Eligibility Criteria: Bursaries for Young People in Defined Vulnerable Groups (VYP)

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Students who meet the criteria, **and who have a financial need**, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so they may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

The bursary for vulnerable groups can provide up to £1,200 in support per year to a student participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more if they need that amount of support. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks will be issued a pro-rata amount, as appropriate, based on an assessment of their actual needs. **Please note that this funding should be provided in kind, in line with the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide.**

In assessing financial needs, the College will also consider the number of hours involved in a student's study programme when deciding if a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

VYP students will be awarded the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the actual costs they have and will not automatically be awarded £1,200. In line with the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide.

The College may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one (or more) of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. The College has the authority to refuse a student's application on this basis.

Equally, the College may grant a bursary to a vulnerable group student of more than £1,200 if we assess they need extra help to remain in education. Any allocation over £1,200 will be taken from the Discretionary Bursary allocation, ensuring that all the eligibility criteria and usual assessment processes are met and followed. Auditable records will be maintained by the Student Services Team detailing the type, purpose and amount of all funding awards.

The College will review applications for VYP bursaries, for each year students require support.

5.1 The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- are 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.

The managed move of legacy benefits claimants to UC means that new claims for the legacy benefits have not been possible since 2018. This means that young people who are aged 16 to 18 now will not be in receipt of the legacy benefits listed above. However, students aged 19 to 25 and

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funded from the 16 to 19 budget (continuing students and those with an EHCP) may still be in receipt of those other legacy benefits.

Definitions:

In Care	<p>The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' as children looked after by a Local Authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989). Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.</p> <p><u>Foster Care: Including privately arranged foster care:</u></p>
	<p>A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after. They meet the criteria for the 'in care' vulnerable group if they have a financial need.</p> <p>A young person who is privately fostered (in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent(s) and the person(s) who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.</p>

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Care Leavers	<p>A 'care leaver' is defined as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or 2. a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16. <p>Only students who meet this definition are eligible if they have a financial need.</p> <p><u>Foster Care: Including privately arranged foster care:</u></p> <p>In some instances, a young person may have been in the care of the local authority and the care transferred to another party via a permanent form of fostering such as a Special Guardianship Order. In these circumstances, the young person is defined as having left care and is now a care leaver. They must meet the definition of a 'care leaver' in full (so, a period of weeks and age range set out above). If they do, they are eligible for help from the bursary for vulnerable groups, where they need financial support to participate.</p>
Universal Credit	<p>Universal Credit has replaced Income Support (IS) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA) as well as other benefits, for new claimants.</p> <p>UC award notifications do not include any information on the benefits they replace. For this reason, the description of the bursaries for vulnerable group category that relates to receipt of UC or IS is that a student must be receiving UC in their own right because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner.</p> <p><i>It is useful to note that bursary funds awarded to a student should not form part of the UC assessment undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). How DWP treat any funding for education depends on whether the student is undertaking advanced full-time education.</i></p> <p><i>It is unlikely that 16 to 18 year-olds will be in advanced full-time education as they are generally on study programmes at level 3 or below. For further information relating to this, please see the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide.</i></p>

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5.2 Evidence of Eligibility

SCC Group must be provided with proof that students meet the criteria for the bursary for vulnerable groups in full. Specifically, that students are in receipt of the specified benefits in their own name or that they fully meet the definitions for in care/care leavers.

The College is required to receive and retain evidence from each student for audit purposes:

- For students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant Local Authority – this is the Local Authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but **must** be clearly from the Local Authority.
- For students in receipt of UC or IS, a copy of their UC or IS claim award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student's name/confirm that they are entitled to the benefit in their own right. The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training. For students in receipt of UC, the College must also see a document such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills and so on.
- For students receiving UC/ESA and DLA and PIP, a copy of their UC claim from DWP and evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP.

UC claimants should be able to print off details of their award from their online account or provide a screenshot to the institution.

Students can also contact their UC work coach (or relevant benefit office if they are receiving IS or ESA) and ask them for help in providing evidence of receiving benefits.

6. Eligibility Criteria: 16 to 19 Discretionary Bursary Fund

SCC Group is required to ensure that our 16 to 19 Discretionary Bursary Guidance & Procedure is focused on making sure that funding reaches those students who are most in need of the financial support.

SCC Group will base all decisions about which students receive a bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student, depending on, eligibility based on household income and their actual financial needs, such as the distance they need to travel to the College and the specific requirements of a student's study programme.

In line with the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide, payments should be made in-kind.

TRAVEL SUPPORT

Our Pass Travel Support:

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We will provide students with a household income below £55,000 who live a minimum of 0.5 miles away from the College with £10.00 of funding to cover the cost of their Our Pass, providing they have indicated and been assessed to have this need.

+Where a student is not eligible for an Our Pass, it is acceptable for the College to issue the learner with a Public Bus Pass, if there is a clear public bus route that is determined as the best way for the learner to travel into College, as long as the College Bus Service does not service the area.

College Service Travel Support:

We will provide students with a household income below £55,000 who live a minimum of 0.5 miles away from the College with FREE travel on the College Bus Service, providing they have indicated and been assessed to have this need.

Standard Travel Support:

We will provide students with a household income of below £45,000 who live a minimum of 3 miles away from the College with funding to support the cost of tram tickets for the necessary zones, providing they have indicated and been assessed to have this need.

Enhanced Travel Support:

We will provide students with a household income of below £35,000 who live a minimum of 10 miles away from the College with funding to support the cost of train tickets to and from the College, providing they have indicated and been assessed to have this need.

Taxi Support:

We may provide students with a household income below £55,000 with funding to support the cost of taxi travel to and from College in exceptional circumstances, where they have indicated and been assessed to have this need, and where public transport or the College Bus Service is not a suitable option.

KIT & EQUIPMENT SUPPORT

IT Kit Support:

We will provide students with a household income of below £35,000 with financial support to cover (or contribute to) the cost of essential IT equipment, such as a laptop or tablet computer, to help them complete their study programme, provided they have indicated and been assessed to have this need.

Additionally, the College may provide students in exceptional need with portable Wi-Fi dongles or internet devices so that they can access the Internet from home, provided they have indicated and been assessed to have this need.

All IT Kit Support, like any 16 to 19 Bursary Fund award, is intended solely to support the student with their studies. This will be outlined to the student in writing at the point of issue. **The College may ask for IT kit/equipment to be returned upon a student's withdrawal/completion of their course.**

Course Related Kit Support:

We will provide students with a household income of below £35,000 with financial support to cover the cost of key course-related kit/equipment that has been identified by our curriculum teams to

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support students in completing their course(s), providing they have indicated and been assessed to have this need.

All Course Related Kit Support, like any 16 to 19 Bursary Fund award, is intended solely to support the student with their studies. This will be outlined to the student in writing at the point of issue. **The College may ask for course related kit/equipment to be returned upon a student's withdrawal/completion of their course.**

TRIPS & VISITS SUPPORT

We will provide students with a household income of below £35,000 with financial support to cover the cost of key course-related trips and visits that have been identified by our curriculum teams to support students in completing their course(s), providing they have indicated and been assessed to have this need.

It is important to note that 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guidance outlines that the bursary fund is not intended to support the costs of foreign/overseas field trips where the content can be found within England at a much cheaper cost and/or to support the cost of field trips that are not a compulsory part of the student's curriculum.

FREE MEALS IN COLLEGE

Free Meals in Further Education

In the first instance, SCC Group will check whether applicants for Free College Meals meet the qualifying criteria outlined in the Free Meals in Further Education Guidance.

Free Meals for Bursary Students

The College understands that not all students will automatically qualify for Free College Meals, based on the Free Meals in Further Education Guidance. Students who fall into this category and have a household income of less than £35,000 may be supported with up to £5.50/day towards the cost of their breakfast and lunch for the days that they attend College, provided they have indicated and been assessed to have this need.

Implementation of Free College Meals Free College Meals will be credited to the student's ID card for use in the College catering outlets. The College's information management systems will record students' uptake of Free College Meals.

Free Meals for Students on Placements

Students who are eligible for Free College Meals and must complete placements outside of the College as part of their study programme may be eligible to receive Free College Meal support via BACS. In these instances, students will be required to retain and provide the College with receipts for audit purposes.

6.2 Emergency Fund

The College will retain a small emergency fund from our 16 to 19 Discretionary Bursary Fund allocation to support students who face exceptional circumstances during the year due to a change in their situation if it impacts their ability to participate in education. This fund will be operationalised by the Head of Student Operations, and the Student Services Team will retain evidence of eligibility, individual assessment and actual participation costs for audit purposes. Expenditure incurred by the emergency fund must be in line with the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide.

7. Publishing our 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guidance & Procedure

SCC Group will publish our 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guidance & Procedure on the College website. This document sets out how we will use the bursary fund and will be made available early enough for students to use the information when making decisions about their post-16 options.

8. Managing Bursary Fund Applications

Applications for both of the 16 to 19 Bursary Funds are to be made via the College website (<https://www.salfordcc.ac.uk>).

The information that is provided as part of the 16 to 19 Bursary Funds application processed will be kept secure and remain confidential.

Students are required to complete an electronic declaration when they apply for help from the 16 to 19 Bursary Funds, to confirm that the evidence they have provided is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. The giving of false or incomplete information that leads to the incorrect/overpayment of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund may result in future support being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered. SCC Group reserves the right to refer instances of false or incomplete information to the police with the possibility of prosecution, as per the Education & Skills Funding Agency's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide.

Once a student's application has been assessed, the Student Services Team will communicate the outcome to the student. This will include the amount of and for what purpose (what types of costs).

8.1 What the Bursary Fund Cannot Be Used For

The 16 to 19 Bursary Funds (discretionary bursary and bursary for defined vulnerable groups) is not intended to:

- Provide learning support – services that institutions give to students. Examples include counselling, mentoring, extra tutoring, or support such as servicing laptops/tablets.
- Support for extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme.
- Support the cost of foreign/overseas field trips where the content can be found within England at a much cheaper cost and/or to support the costs of field trips that are not a compulsory part of the student's curriculum.
- Make payments to support students' general living costs.

8.2 Paying Bursary Funding to Eligible Students

The Education & Skills Funding Agency strongly encourages SCC Group to pay both defined vulnerable groups and discretionary bursaries to students in-kind rather than cash as far as possible to ensure that the bursary is spent for the reasons it was awarded. In-kind payments include, but

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are not limited to, travel passes, vouchers or credits for meals, required books and required equipment.

When the College makes an in-kind payment to a student, we will explain the value of the payment(s) and, if appropriate, how these have been deducted from their bursary award.

If SCC Group makes a bursary fund payment to a student, rather than providing support in-kind, this will be paid via BACS transfer to the student's own bank account. The College will not make bursary payments into another person's account, except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account.

8.3 Conditions for Receiving Bursary Funding

All students in receipt of bursary must meet termly punctuality and attendance targets and must meet the College's expectations regarding conduct to ensure continued financial support.

If the College purchases equipment, such as a laptop or internet dongle, if required for the student to complete their study programme, the student may be required to return these if they leave their study programme early, so that they can be re-allocated to another student in need. It is not the responsibility of the College to replace or repair damaged, faulty or stolen kit or equipment.

By completing a bursary application, students will sign a declaration confirming their agreement to these conditions. SCC Group reserves the right to withdraw or suspend bursary funding if these conditions of bursary are not met.

8.4 Complaints & Appeals for the 16 to 19 Bursary Funds

Any student or parent/carers who is unhappy with how their application for bursary funding has been managed or the support that has been provided is required to follow SCC Group's Complaints Procedure. In the first instance, these concerns should be raised with the Student Services Team and escalated to Martin Townsend (martin.townsend@salfordcc.ac.uk), Head of Student Operations, if necessary.