



Education  
Funding  
Agency

# **16-19 Bursary Fund Examples of Good Practice**

**April 2013**

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## Introduction

This document provides practical examples of institutions using the [16-19 Bursary Fund Guide](#) to develop their own innovative schemes to help students who most need financial support to participate in further education or training. The 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2013/14 re-emphasises the importance of ensuring available funds are targeted at those students experiencing the greatest financial disadvantages, that the amounts allocated are sufficient to enable these students to participate in education, and that the availability of funding is communicated effectively to prospective and actual students before, during and after the enrolments process.

This good practice guide is aimed at schools, colleges, academies, training institutions, independent institutions and local authorities (collectively referred to as institutions in this guide) to help them to administer the 16-19 Bursary Fund in the 2013/14 academic year. It supports the Department's updated *16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2013/14* and should be read alongside the accompanying *2013/14 16-19 Bursary Fund Q&A for institutions and local authorities*.

It updates the 2012/13 good practice guide, which was based upon interviews with thirty institutions early in 2012 and input from stakeholders, including the National Children and Adult Services, Barnardo's, the Association of Colleges, the Association of School and College Leaders and the Who Cares Trust. This year's version draws upon a further series of interviews with institutions late in 2012.

We would like to acknowledge and to thank all those institutions who have given us permission to use their examples of best practice in this document: Bexley College, Bolton College, Bradford Academy, Bridgewater College, Cambridge Heath College, Chew Valley School, Dover Girls' Grammar School, East Kent College, Guildford College, Hertford Regional College, Lakes College, Longley Park Sixth Form College, Macclesfield College, Mid-Kent College, Newcastle-Under-Lyme College, Oldham College, Queen Mary's College, Regent College, Strode College, Sunderland College, Walford and North Shropshire College, and Wiltshire College. We would also like to thank our local authority contacts in South Gloucestershire, Stoke on Trent, Torbay and Warwickshire whose examples of good practice appear in this guide.

This guide is by no means exhaustive and we would welcome other examples of how the needs of financially disadvantaged students have been met. Please send these to [1619bursaryfund.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:1619bursaryfund.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk)

# Eligibility

## Vulnerable Student Bursaries

The *16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2013/14* outlines the following defined vulnerable groups:

- Young people in care,
- Care leavers,
- Young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit
- Disabled young people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments.

There may be some young people affected by benefit changes in 2013 and therefore students in the following situations are also eligible for a vulnerable student bursary:

- Young people who receive a Universal Credit payment in their own name.
- Young people who are disabled and receive Employment Support Allowance and a Personal Independence Payment in their own name.

Where students fall into one or more of these groups, they are eligible for a bursary of £1,200 (which should be calculated on a pro-rata basis where appropriate, at a maximum rate of £40 per week).

These students may be harder to identify or engage in education and are less likely to be aware of the support available from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Working proactively with local agencies like social services, young people's advice and support services or local authority looked after children's education services and care leaver services, provides the best way of identifying young people who may be eligible for vulnerable student bursaries and encouraging them to apply for support. These agencies may also be able to help them complete their application forms and provide evidence of the young person's status.

Below are some examples of institutions working with local services to identify young people in these defined groups.

Since the 16-19 Bursary Fund was introduced, the college has worked with Connexions advisers and the council's social services team. Together these services have helped the college identify young people who fall into the defined vulnerable groups and encourage them to enrol at the college and apply for funding.

**Bolton College, Bolton  
General FE College**

The College works closely with the care teams in the local boroughs which refer young people in care or recent care leavers to the College and encourage them to apply for vulnerable group bursaries during the enrolment process. Clear and simplified information is available to all staff and learners about financial support (including vulnerable group bursaries) and is on display throughout the College as well as on the College website and in social media. The process of application and award is simple, effective and responsive to learners' needs.

**Hertford Regional College, Hertfordshire  
General FE College**

Information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund is included in a bulletin to social worker contacts. This provides information on key events and is published three times during the academic year. This ensures that social workers are updated on key information on the College's bursary fund and key dates.

**East Kent College  
General FE College**

Young people who might be eligible for a vulnerable student bursary are identified through the College's Inclusion Manager, who has excellent links with local agencies in contact with vulnerable young people (like the YMCA, Social Services and Youth Offending Teams). This helps the College to identify eligible young people before enrolment so that they become aware of this support early on. They are then assisted in completing the application process through enrolment.

**Guildford College, Surrey  
General FE College**

Social workers who work with the most disadvantaged young people help the College to identify potential vulnerable bursary recipients prior to admission.

**Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke  
Sixth Form College**

**Torbay's Care to Community team** has a joint working protocol with the local further education college that includes information sharing and joint working to manage problems with attendance, behaviour, punctuality or performance.

**The Virtual School in Stoke on Trent** has developed a 16-18 learner support agreement for young people in care and recent care leavers in partnership with further education colleges, work-based learning providers and the careers service. The agreement ensures young people are identified and well supported through the Post 16 application process. As part of this agreement, young people also have an educational pathway plan which tracks support (including financial support) and progress throughout their time in further education or training.

## Discretionary Bursaries

Any eligible student may apply to their institution for a discretionary bursary. These are intended for students most in need of financial support and the eligibility criteria needs to reflect local barriers to participation and the individual circumstances that may prevent young people from participating in their chosen course. The amount allocated needs to be sufficient to enable students to complete their course (for example, by helping them with the cost of travelling to and from college, buying a meal whilst there, or covering the cost of any equipment or clothing they might need for their course).

Here are some examples of institutions ensuring that discretionary funding is reaching students most in need of financial help.

Eligibility for discretionary bursaries is based on annual household incomes (verified by Tax Credits forms, a P60, or 3-6 months' worth of bank statements) in three bands:

- Band 1- annual household income of £15,860 or less (these students receive a daily lunch allowance, a contribution towards cost of a bus pass if they live over two miles from college, payment for educational visits during the year, a contribution towards exam re-sits, and reimbursement of the cost of visiting university open days or interviews). Students with annual household incomes of less than £12,000, and between £12,000 and £15,860, receive tiered weekly payments subject to attendance and behaviour conditions.
- Band 2 – annual household income between £15,860-£20,817 (these students receive the same allowances and contributions as Band 1 – but smaller contributions towards bus travel, educational visits and re-sits.
- Band 3 – annual household income between £20,817 and £25,521 (these students receive a daily lunch allowance).

Students can apply more than once if their circumstances change. If this happens they are reassessed by divisional administrators which may necessitate a one-to-one interview with the Head of Progress and Welfare, particularly if there are exceptional circumstances.

**Regent College, Leicester  
Sixth Form College**

Students whose household income is less than £20,000 a year are eligible for discretionary bursaries. The College asks for proof of income for working families, and for non-working families evidence of household benefits. In addition the college looks at individual familial circumstances which may impact upon the household income, such as whether the young person lives in a single parent household, or whether there are other children or young people living in the household.

**Guildford College, Surrey  
General FE College**

Cambridge Heath Sixth Form uses free school meal eligibility as the basis for its criteria for discretionary bursaries, and has worked with its local authority to ensure that it receives data on year-eleven free school meals eligibility for all students enrolling in year twelve. This saves on administration time, and means that new students who may be eligible for bursaries are easily identifiable. Recognising that not all young people who are eligible for free school meals take up the offer, discretionary bursaries are also available for young people who were entitled to free school meals but who did not apply for them. Its criteria for discretionary bursaries are:

1. Free School Meal take-up in year eleven.
2. Free School Meal entitlement in year eleven and twelve (i.e. the young person is entitled to Free School Meals but they have not taken up the offer). In these cases, students are asked to provide evidence of receipt of benefits in their household. The students are also encouraged to apply for Free School Meals in years 12 and 13

**Cambridge Heath Sixth Form, London  
School Sixth Form**

## Tailored arrangements

Taking unusual or exceptional circumstances into account means that support can be tailored to students' individual needs. This might include higher costs attached to certain courses, or taking account of additional dependent children or young people in the same household.

In addition to having an income threshold of less than £21,000 a year, **Newcastle-Under-Lyme College** holds a list of courses that have particularly high costs for equipment or specialist clothing for example. The college provides eligible students participating on these courses with subsidies to help them purchase the necessary equipment.

At **Wiltshire College** applications are assessed on the household income of the student, which must be below £21,000; in addition, the number of dependent children in full-time education in the household is taken into consideration when assessing applications for a discretionary bursary.

## Working with local authorities

Institutions are encouraged to work with local authorities and consider innovative solutions to raise awareness of the 16-19 Bursary Fund amongst young people, particularly those in the vulnerable groups. They might also work in partnership with other institutions and the local authority to develop a common approach to administering the 16-19 Bursary Fund. By participating in collaborative schemes, like those shown below, institutions can share good practice and provide a consistent level of support to students in their area.

The majority of schools in Plymouth operate a collaborative bursary fund supported by **Plymouth City Council**. Post-16 teams in the schools assist the students to complete a simple application form which is forwarded to the local authority, who assess the application against common criteria and arrange for awards to be made. In the application form students are asked to indicate what they want to use the funding for and evidence of household income is checked.

**Macclesfield College** is part of the **Cheshire East** 14-25 learning executive which meets regularly, and includes representatives from four local colleges. This aims to ensure a consistent approach to financial support across all four colleges, and also takes in wider issues like careers advice for young people at the four colleges. The college also shares good practice with the National Association for Managers of Student Support Services.

Further education colleges and local authorities in the **former Avon area** have agreed [a set of principles](#) governing the award of vulnerable student bursaries, which include:

- tailoring bursaries to meet the financial barriers and circumstances of individuals;
- a hierarchy of support – starting with travel and course costs where applicable;
- staggering payments (both cash and in-kind) and linking them to attendance;
- providing budget management support for students;
- providing students with a written breakdown of how their bursary has been calculated; and where a student permits it, sharing bursary information with foster carers.

**Warwickshire local authority** has worked with local schools and colleges on the administration of the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Good practice recommended as part of this work includes:

- Inviting parents with difficulties in reading and writing themselves to their child's school or college to support them face to face with completing the forms
- Purchasing laptops to loan to students identified as being in financial hardship
- Raising awareness of the 16-19 Bursary Fund in year 11 assemblies and inviting pupils to speak to someone in confidence if they require further information
- Encouraging the retention of funding for any in year changes, for example where a parent is made redundant
- Encouraging institutions to share experience, good practice and work together to review policies.



# Assessment and Payment of Bursaries

## Assessment of bursaries

In 2013/14, institutions will receive 16-19 Bursary Fund allocations for discretionary bursaries only. The funding for vulnerable student bursaries will be held centrally and institutions will draw down funding for vulnerable student bursaries on demand, throughout the academic year.

The level of support that young people need will vary, and is dependent upon a range of factors, including the type of course they are undertaking, whether they need any specialist equipment, and their travel costs. Different institutions will have different enrolment patterns and the way they assess applications for bursaries will have to reflect this. Applications for support for both vulnerable student bursaries and discretionary bursaries may also be received throughout the academic year to reflect that young people's circumstances can change. Institutions are encouraged to manage their Bursary Fund carefully to ensure that payments reflect individual needs, account for new in-year applications, and to provide any exceptional or additional support that is needed.

Any student who qualified for free school meals in year eleven receives a weekly meal allowance subject to continuing to satisfy the free meal criteria. The College also makes awards for travel and equipment costs, which are calculated on an individual basis depending on the actual cost of travelling to college and the requirements of the course being undertaken.

**Sunderland College  
General Further Education College**

While there are some high level rules that underpin the eligibility criteria for discretionary bursaries (around household income or receipt of benefits), awards reflect students' personal circumstances and actual need.

- The distance travelled between home and the College is taken into consideration when considering bursaries, with students who travel more than three miles receiving more funding than students who travel shorter distances on public transport. This is generally paid over ten months into the student's bank account so that the student can use this funding to buy monthly bus passes.
- Funding is held back to reimburse students for the cost of any equipment they might need to purchase for their course. Upon receiving evidence that the equipment has been purchased the student is reimbursed through BACS.

**Guildford College, Surrey  
General FE College**

Discretionary bursaries are dependent upon the individual's circumstances, with students on courses requiring equipment to be purchased receiving higher payments than students on other courses where costs are minimal. Some of the students travel long distances, sometimes from other local authorities or in some cases from across the Welsh border, and the varying transport costs are also taken into account in discretionary payments.

**Walford and North Shropshire College  
General Further Education College**

The school operates a general eligibility criterion based on household income. The award depends on individual circumstances such as value of savings, number of siblings and the cost of courses, trips and transport. Students are assisted with the completion of applications which are then anonymised so that students and parents feel comfortable that their personal financial situation is not known to others in school. A panel of governors meet to consider the anonymised applications at the beginning of the academic year. A contingency fund is kept to consider late applications and changes in circumstances.

**Chew Valley School, Bath and North East Somerset  
Secondary School**

## Setting conditions for bursary payments

Receipt of both vulnerable student bursaries and discretionary bursaries should be conditional upon students meeting agreed standards set by their institutions, typically relating to attendance and/or behaviour. These conditions must be clear, available and understood by students, and institutions should keep evidence that they are in place and that bursary recipients have agreed to abide by these conditions; for example by issuing a written agreement that is signed by the student. The following are examples of this.

Students have to be on target for every subject to receive payment of their discretionary bursary. This includes achieving their predicted grade as well as a behavioural element. Individual circumstances, such as illness or family problems are taken into account.

**Bradford Academy, West Yorkshire  
Academy with Sixth Form**

The college has very clear terms and conditions for receipt of the bursary, which are highlighted on the application form. The college monitors this to identify any issues and consideration of additional support. A minimum 85% attendance is the current standard but support may continue if a student's attendance falls below the requirement, but there is a valid reason for this.

**Oldham College, Oldham  
General FE College**

At the start of their course, students are expected to sign a contract which states the rules that they will abide by – including truthfulness, attendance and behaviour. If the student does not comply, in particular if there are absences, they are sent a text message informing them that their bursary may be withheld. Before this happens they are given an opportunity to explain their absence.

**Lakes College, West Cumbria  
General FE College**

## Payment of bursaries

Many institutions have found that paying discretionary and in some cases vulnerable student bursaries ‘in kind’ is an efficient and cost-effective way of helping students to meet their expenses. This could include purchasing travel passes or course equipment, free meals or waiving fees for course trips. This helps to ensure that the bursary awarded matches the students’ educational needs.

Students are paid half-termly by BACS but they also collect a daily meal allowance. As well as ensuring that Bursary Fund recipients can afford to buy food at college, this also helps the college to monitor their attendance. If they regularly fail to collect their meal allowance they are invited to meet the College’s student support services. Where they have been found not to have been attending, deductions will be made from their next payments.

**Bexley College, London  
General FE College**

Bursary awards to students in the vulnerable groups are tailored to meet the needs of individual students, and in some cases carers and social workers are involved in establishing the most appropriate way of getting the funding to the young person. At the beginning of term if specialist equipment and/or a bus pass is needed, this is purchased by the College, and a meal card is offered, with the cost of these items being deducted from the student’s award at the start. The remainder of the award is usually paid to the student either monthly or termly depending on need. In cases where a carer has responsibility for the young person’s finances, meetings are set up with them to decide how payments should be made. In these situations, the funding can be paid to the carer every month, with the expectation that they will pass it on to the student.

Discretionary awards are made to students not in the vulnerable groups based on parental income and the cost of student’s individual programmes. Awards are also made towards the cost of bus passes and in certain cases meal cards are given.

**Bridgwater College, Somerset  
General Further Education College**

Vulnerable student bursaries are tailored for each recipient rather than applying a one size fits all solution. Every student who qualifies for a vulnerable student bursary is offered an interview with a financial support advisor to decide together on the best way to deliver their support. Priority areas are addressed first; travel to college, equipment costs and food, and appropriate amounts are allocated to ensure the student is supported with their studies. Additional expenditure such as university visits is also discussed and where money remains, an amount is retained for unforeseen costs.

**Mid-Kent College  
General Further Education College**

Students receiving a vulnerable student bursary receive £20 per week via BACS. Additional funds are also given at the start of their course so that students can pay for equipment and course-related items. Those in the vulnerable groups are also offered travel vouchers as part of their payments. The Student Services Team meet with these students regularly to help with budgeting and to identify any barriers to learning that could be overcome through bursary funds. A percentage of the total fund is kept back as a hardship fund to respond to emergencies that may arise throughout the year.

**Longley Park College, Sheffield  
Sixth Form College**

## Emergency payments

The Guide recommends: *'A small emergency fund for exceptional circumstances should also be retained.'* A number of institutions have ring-fenced some of their bursary allocation to make emergency payments throughout the academic year.

At **East Kent College**, students who have been awarded a bursary can apply for additional support if they find themselves in desperate circumstances later in the year. Any subsequent support would be dependent on the outcome of an appeals process which would confirm eligibility in the light of the circumstances involved.

**Dover Girls Grammar School** sixth form in Kent has established a committee of three people (the Head Teacher, Head of Sixth Form and School Business Manager) who meet to decide on Bursary Fund applications four times a year. The committee can also decide upon emergency payments to students whose circumstances have changed.

At **Sunderland College**, if a student becomes estranged from their parents or carer part way through a course, the College's student services team works with a local charity and the local authority to help them find accommodation and claim income support. In the meantime they often provide an emergency bursary payment to these students to help tide them over. The amount is dependent on need. A contingency is kept back to cover these instances. Applications are considered at any time throughout the year.

# Communications, Governance and Monitoring

## Promotion of the 16-19 Bursary Fund

Communicating details about the 16-19 Bursary Fund is the responsibility of individual institutions or groups of institutions where they have chosen to collaborate with the local authority.

Keeping information about financial support up to date in literature and on their websites and ensuring that information is available to existing and prospective students is recommended.

Some institutions have adopted innovative solutions to raise awareness of the fund - for example through joint work with local schools to raise awareness of post-16 financial support to young people in year eleven, so that prospective students know what support is available before they enroll, thus helping to reduce the risk of young people ending up not in education, employment or training (NEET). Promoting the 16-19 Bursary Fund through agencies that work with disadvantaged young people, like local authority Children's Services, can help institutions target young people who may be eligible for vulnerable student bursaries. As the following examples demonstrate there are many ways of informing young people about the help that is available.

There is information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund on the College's website and in the prospectus for prospective students, and posters are on display around the College throughout the year. Information is distributed at open evenings which are attended by year eleven pupils from local schools. Further information, including an application form is included following enrolment, and all new entrants receive a text message and an email message about the 16-19 Bursary Fund soon after the start of the academic year.

**Guildford College, Surrey  
General FE College**

Information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund is publicised in full and part time prospectuses, at open evenings, in leaflets, at enrolment, on posters around college and in the College's internal newsletter. Information, application forms and guidance is also sent out in application packs, and tutors are encouraged to pass information on during one-to-one meetings with students. The College also works closely with the Mendip YMCA to target potential students who are homeless and provide them with information on vulnerable group bursaries.

**Strode College, Somerset  
General FE College**

Mid-Kent College employs a variety of methods to ensure eligible students are aware of the vulnerable group bursary. Aside from information in marketing materials, the College promotes the 16-19 Bursary Fund and other support through partner organisations such as Connexions, social services, foster parent networks, schools, asylum support teams and youth offending and health services. Within the college all staff are informed about the support available and the needs of young people in the vulnerable groups. The College works with these organisations to identify and engage with young people considering further education and to provide opportunities to discuss the support they may need.

**Mid Kent College  
General Further Education College**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is publicised on the College's website, in all its publicity literature, including the prospectus and newsletter. All students are given a leaflet about it as part of their enrolment pack. It is also advertised on the local radio, and year eleven students are informed about the financial support available during school visits.

Additionally, publicity materials are given to the council's Looked After Children unit to target children in care and care leavers. Estranged young people who may be receiving income support are targeted through a local charity and housing project for young people.

**Sunderland College  
General Further Education College**

Information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund and an application form is included in the College's general application pack during both the Summer and Easter application rounds. This means that students can apply for support before they start their course. This year around 40% of Bursary Fund recipients had arranged their bursaries before starting their courses.

**Lakes College, West Cumbria  
General FE College**

The College markets its 16-19 Bursary Fund proactively by providing information to prospective students prior to enrolment at open evenings, talks at schools etc. Any young person who attends a pre-enrolment interview gets a card with brief information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund and pointers directing them to the full information on the College's website. Information is also provided in enrolment packs, in conversations with tutors and via the website. In addition, social workers who work with the most disadvantaged young people help the College to identify potential vulnerable student bursary recipients.

**Queen Mary's College Basingstoke  
Sixth Form College**

The college uses text messages throughout the year to inform students of the financial support available to them. In the summer term, text messages are sent to inform students that application forms are available to download and complete. Comprehensive information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund is also available on the college website, on power point presentations that appear on screens throughout the college, and on dedicated noticeboards in the college. The 16-19 Bursary Fund is also promoted on Open Days, parents' evenings and in the college prospectus.

**Regent College, Leicester  
Sixth Form College**

## Further information

Information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund and links to all supporting documents are available on the Department for Education website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentssupport/funding/a00203061/16-19-bursaries>

Institutions should send all queries about the allocation and administration of the 16-19 Bursary Fund via email. Academies should contact

[academyquestions@efa.education.gov.uk](mailto:academyquestions@efa.education.gov.uk); schools, colleges, training institutions, local authorities and other institutions should contact:

[1619bursaryfund.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:1619bursaryfund.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk)



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