

The Sixth Form Bolton
Student Financial Support Policy and Guidance

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1. Overview

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

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 or by individual interviews.

This funding is to support students who face the greatest barriers to help them continue in Education. Support can be provided for the following costs where these are not normally provided by The Sixth Form:

- Meals/drinks while attending The Sixth Form
- Travel costs to/from The Sixth Form
- Examination Re-sit fees (in accordance with the Re-sit Policy)
- Specialist course equipment and text books/publications
- DBS clearance checks where required for course related work placements
- Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) application fee and also contribute to the costs of University interviews and Open Days.
- Costs associated with trips/visits which are linked to their learning. For example 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 £4.25 per day)
- Any costs associated with work placement/experience including travel, specialist clothing and meals/drinks (unless the student is eligible for Free Meals in which case funding will be provided to the value of £4.25 per day or lunch can be provided by The Sixth Form.) organised by The Sixth Form
- Additional Printing credit and help with any stationary costs
- Any IT equipment that is necessary for students to complete their studies

Please note all funding awards are subject to funding availability.

2. 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 guaranteed 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 2023-24, will need to complete a declaration form via the Student Portal, to receive Free Meals in 2024-25.

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 £4.25 using their student ID card. Please note the allowance does not accrue if not used or if the student is absent.

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 or lunch can be provided by The Sixth Form.

3. 16-18 Bursary Fund

The fund is intended to help students with the essential costs of participating in their study programme for example travel costs, meals, essential books or equipment. It cannot be used to support extra-curricular or non-compulsory activities or to cover any living costs.

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

3.1 Priority Group 1 – Vulnerable Bursary

To be eligible **the student** must be aged under 19 on the 31 August 2024 (or continuing a study programme they began aged 16-18) and meet one of the criteria below:

- In care or care leaver
- In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves
- In receipt of both Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their own right, 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 will be individually assessed to determine the amount of support required however, please note this funding is not guaranteed. Students in this vulnerable group are not automatically entitled to a bursary if they do not have educational financial needs and/or their educational financial needs are covered from other sources. Students may be allocated a limited award based on their individual needs. Individually assessed payments are made weekly, paid directly into the student's bank account or given through payment in kind.

3.2 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 31st August 2024 or continuing a study programme they began aged 16-18
- 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 (for example Universal Credit) which shows that the income doesn't exceed £35,000. Please note this must be the most recent award notice
 - Have a combined "Household Income" below £35,000 (Household Income relates to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student). Evidence must be 2 recent pay slips and the P60 from 2023/24

Application Process

Students are required to complete the Student Free Meals/ Bursary Application Form via the Student Portal. This process allows students to complete their application form and upload 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 Universal Tax Credit Award Notice if preferred
 - Recent Universal Credit/ Working Tax Credit evidence can also be used to establish household income providing the income doesn't exceed £35,000

Applications will be accepted throughout the academic year subject to funding availability. Students will be notified via email of the outcome of their application. The email will detail the individual support that the student will receive under the Bursary scheme.

Students who are continuing with their study programme at The Sixth Form Bolton and received Discretionary Bursary in academic year 2023-24, will need to complete a declaration form via the Student Portal, to receive Discretionary Bursary in 2024-25.

Method by Which Support Provided

Support will be based on the individual needs of the student and provided by a combination of:

- A weekly payment may be provided to contribute to payment for food/ drinks, for each day the student attends The Sixth Form. This will be paid directly into the student's bank account
- Payment in kind for any of the determined costs listed on page 1

3.3 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
- Domestic emergency
- Homelessness
- Safeguarding

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.

4. Childcare Support for Students

For any young person who has childcare costs, financial Support is available through Care to Learn www.gov.uk/care-to-learn

We aim to remove any barriers to help keep students in education. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Student Information on 01204 846215 or e-mail info@bolton-sfc.ac.uk

5. Student Expectations

Students are expected to maintain 100% attendance at The Sixth Form. Any unauthorised absences will stop any weekly Student Bursary/ Travel Grant payment.

The Student Bursary may be stopped for other reasons that are determined by The Sixth Form.

Students are expected to notify The Sixth Form if their reasons for eligibility change and they no longer meet the eligibility criteria.