



Student Bursaries and Free College Meals

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POLICY STATEMENT

Varndean College receives an annual allocation for 16-19 Bursary funds including the Discretionary Learner Grant (DLG) and Free College Meals, Adult Learner Support Funds (ALSF) and the Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund (ALLBF).

The funds are intended to help students to overcome financial barriers to their participation in education. Students, parents and carers can seek advice from the College regarding the financial support available. All funds are administered in line with the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) guidelines.

POLICY SCOPE

Only learners who meet the residency criteria and have home status can be considered for a bursary or grant. The College will determine the eligibility of applicants to the funds according to the ESFA guidelines. Students who are eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary are awarded monies pre-determined by government. The College has been given discretion to disperse the remainder to those facing the greatest barriers to participation through the (DLG), LSF and ALLBF. There is no entitlement to this support, but the College has developed criteria for the allocation of each of these discretionary funds which will ensure that the funds are dispersed fairly and with regard to the needs of the individual student.

A student is only eligible to receive a grant or bursary when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, has made a successful application to the College.

POLICY AIM

To explain the bursaries and grants available to students

PRINCIPLES

- The College will administer the allocated funds in line with government guidelines.
- The College will allocate funds in line with any limits set by government
- All applications will be assessed against published criteria.
- The College will publicise the funds as widely as possible.
- The College will work with other providers to ensure equity across the City and, as far as possible, through Sussex and Surrey.

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- Where possible the payments will be in-kind and staged.
- Other payments will be made by BACS
- Those in receipt of a Grant may be expected to repay some or all of the DLG if they leave before the end of the year, or are found to be receiving financial support from another source for the same costs

STUDENTS AGED 16-18

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2019 to be eligible for the following bursaries.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary learner grant if they are continuing on a study programme they commenced aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Vulnerable Bursaries

The most vulnerable students aged 16-18 are entitled to a Bursary of £1200 and these students are identified as:

- in care (including unaccompanied asylum seeking children)
- care leavers
- receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit 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 or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

Free School Meals

Students are eligible for Free College Meals if they or their parents/guardians are currently in receipt of

one or more of the following benefits:

- income Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

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- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa

Discretionary Learner Grant

Eligible students according to the criteria published in the guidelines and application form can apply for funds to assist with

- Travel costs
- Course related charges
- Essential trips
- University visits
- Exam resits
- UCAS application fees
- Additional course related costs, such as stationery and books

19+ STUDENTS

Discretionary Learner Support Fund

Eligible students according to the criteria published in the guidelines and application form can apply for funds to assist with

- Travel
- Tuition fees
- Examination fees
- Additional course related costs
- Childcare costs

Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund

Eligible students according to the criteria published in the guidelines and application form can apply for funds to assist with

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- Travel
- Additional course related costs
- Childcare costs

Discretionary Learning Grant

DLG Funds are limited and priority will be given to members of the following groups in order:

- 1 Those in receipt of a Vulnerable Bursary.
- 2 Those whose parents/guardians are currently in receipt of a means tested-benefit (Income Support or Universal Credit; Income Based Job seekers Allowance; Child Tax Credit, where the household income is £16,190 or less; Employment and Support Allowance or Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit).
- 3 Those whose parents/guardians have a current Child Tax Credit Award Notification of less than £16190 where there is a Working Tax element
- 4 Those whose parents/guardians are currently in receipt of Child and/or Working Tax Credit with household income below £27000
- 5 Those whose financial position has recently put them into one of the above groups or who have a low income but do not fit into any of the above categories.

There is no entitlement to a grant of a specific amount from the fund. The amount awarded will depend on both household income and educational need. It will also depend on the number of eligible applications received. Allocations will take account of:

- household income for which evidence has been provided
- costs incurred in attending College (for example travel of more than 2 miles)
- costs incurred in following a course

Continued support through the grant is reviewed termly; particular consideration is given to meeting the expectations as set out in the Student Contract.

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Students aged 19+

LSF Funds are limited and priority will be given to members of the following groups in order:

1. Full time /full year students in receipt of a means-tested benefit: (Income Support, Universal Credit, Income based Jobseekers Allowance, Working Tax Credit where the household income is less than £16,190, Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit).
2. Part-time students in receipt of a means-tested benefit: (Income Support, Universal Credit, Income based Jobseekers Allowance, Working Tax Credit where the household income is less than £16,190, Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit).
3. Students in receipt of a means tested benefit with an income of less than £27000
4. those whose financial position has recently put them into one of the above groups or who have a low income but do not fit into any of the above categories.

There is no entitlement to a specific amount from the funds. The amount awarded will depend on both household income and educational need. It will also depend on the number of eligible applications received. Allocations will take account of:

- Household income for which evidence has been provided
- Costs incurred in attending College (for example travel of more than 2 miles)
- Costs incurred in following a course
- A limited proportion of the total funds can be used for course and examination fees

Continued support through the grant is reviewed termly; particular consideration is given to attendance.

19+ Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund

The Loans Bursary Fund is aimed at helping vulnerable and disadvantaged adult learners such as those with learning difficulties or disabilities and parents who need help with childcare. Only students who have been approved for the Advanced Learner Loan may apply for the Loans Bursary Fund. Applications can be taken from:

- Full time /full year students in receipt of a means-tested benefit: (Income Support, Universal Credit, Income based Jobseekers Allowance, Working Tax Credit where the household income is less than £16,190, Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit).

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- Part-time students in receipt of a means-tested benefit: (Income Support, Universal Credit, Income based Jobseekers Allowance, Working Tax Credit where the household income is less than £16,190, Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit).
- Students with a household income of less than £27000 a year
- Those whose financial position has recently put them into one of the above groups or who have a low income but do not fit into any of the above categories.

Application for any of the above

1. Application forms will be available on-line and from the Registry.
2. Applications will be accepted by the College Registry from the end of June if a firm offer of a place has been accepted.
3. Applications for funds will only be considered if the form is fully completed and is accompanied by the evidence required.
4. Learners will not necessarily receive all the funds for which they apply. If the applications received exceed the allocated funds, the College will use the priority groupings to award partial grants with the exception of Vulnerable Bursary students (who will receive £1,200 in line with government guidelines) and students in receipt of Free College Meals- who will receive £3.00 per day for each day they are timetabled
5. Applications will be assessed by the Registry and forwarded to a panel comprising the Vice Principal or Head of School; the Business Director and another member of staff.

Learners will be informed of the decision and the amount of any award in writing.

Data Protection

In order to apply for a Grant or bursary, students and/or parents will need to share personal and sensitive data with the College. This data will be treated as highly confidential and shared only with those who need to assess the application. The application form and evidence will be processed in accordance with our Privacy Statement and Data Protection Policy. A student in receipt of a bursary or grant will not be so identified on interfaces

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accessed by staff in general; their status as grant/bursary recipients will be recorded for funding and audit purposes only and where necessary for disbursement of funds.

Appeals

- Learners can appeal in writing against the decision using the College's Complaints procedure.
- In the case of Appeal, decisions will be reviewed by 2 members of the College Senior Leadership Team

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

- 16-18 Financial Assistance
- Admission Policy 16-18
- Admission Policy 19+
- Application and Guidelines for 16-18 Discretionary Learning Grant
- Application and Guidelines for 19+ Learner Support Funds
- Application and Guidelines for Advanced Learner Loan Bursary
- Application and Guidelines for Advanced Learner Loan Childcare Support Funds
- ESFA 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide: 2019 to 2020 [Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2019-to-2020-academic-year>]
- ESFA 16-19 funding: free meals in further education funded institutions for 2019 to 2020 [Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-for-2019-to-2020>]
- ESFA Advanced Learner Loans funding rules: 2019 to 2020 [Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/804180/Draft_loans_rules_final_version_6_March.docx.pdf]
- ESFA funded adult education budget (AEB): funding rules 2019 to 2020 [Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/804647/AEB_2019-20_rules_24_May_draft_v.1.pdf]
- ESFA Funding Guidance for Young People 2019 to 2020. [Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/806069/16_to_19_funding_guidance_Regulations_2019_to_2020_Final.pdf]
- Fees and Charges