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RICHARD HUISH COLLEGE

BURSARIES AND FREE COLLEGE MEAL POLICY 2023/2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

These notes set out Richard Huish College's Discretionary, Vulnerable Bursary and Free College Meal Policies

The College will:

- Take positive action to ensure that all students know and understand what financial support they may be eligible for from the 16-19 Bursary through information given at Open Events, Advice and Guidance meetings, and other literature.
- Process applications quickly and fairly
- Monitor and review the use of 16-19 Bursary funding regularly.
- Ensure the 16-19 Bursaries are distributed in line with Government Guidance
- Assist with completion of online applications for students.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The 16-19 Discretionary, Vulnerable Bursary and Free college Meals is provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

These funds are awarded to financially assist students with the costs associated with their program of study and travel on public transport to and from college, helping to breakdown financial barriers that may discourage participation or completion of their program of study.

Early application is recommended. Funds are limited, and eligibility to the bursary does not indicate entitlement to funding. Awards are based on individual need according to the student's program of study.

3. SCOPE

Students studying full or part time ESFA funded programmes whose parents/carers income is below the college designated threshold for eligibility for the Discretionary Bursary or in receipt of income related benefits can apply for these funds.

4. Types of Support Available

4a. DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

- Eligibility to Discretionary Bursary
- Students aged 16 or over but under 19 on the 31st August of the year they register at Richard Huish College to be eligible for an award from the bursary fund in any academic year.
- Students aged 19 or over are eligible to receive an award from the Discretionary Bursary if they are continuing on a study program, they began aged 16 – 18 (19+ continuers) or have an EHCP. Students aged 19 or over are NOT eligible for a Discretionary Bursary
- Students must meet the residency criteria on the ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision (therefore meet the residency criteria for bursary funding eligibility)
- Registered on an EFSA funded course.

Financial Support is offered through the Discretionary Bursary for the following:

- Travel costs travelling to and from the College, bus/train travel only, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- The cost of travel to and from an Extended Industry Placement for those studying T Levels
- Support towards essential materials, equipment and other course related costs
- A contribution to musical lessons for students studying one of the listed music courses
- The cost of day trips and residential trips, essential to the student in order to achieve the courses learning objectives.
- In exceptional circumstances and where funding allows there may be help towards non-compulsory trips that provides a valid learning experience
- Support towards additional expenses/emergencies which may occur during the year if funding allows
- Help towards the cost of progression on to higher education (UCAS fees)

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- Help towards the cost of meals where students are not eligible for Free School Meals where the household income is below £25,000 gross per annum.
- In addition to the above financial support the 16-19 Bursary will support the purchase of essential technology needed to assist students learning. This will be in the form of any loaned devices that will remain the property of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, allowing future students to benefit from the purchase.

4b. VULNERABLE BURSARY

Students under 19 considered to be a vulnerable young person will be eligible to access up to £1,200 depending on their individual need. This award is based on students studying a programme of at least 30-week duration, students studying less than this may be eligible for a proportional award. The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In Care
- Care Leavers
- In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves
- The Young Person is in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment
- An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (under 18) under the care of the Local Authority.

The College require written evidence of the student's status from a relevant agency working with the young person and/or written evidence of benefit entitlements. Students will need to apply through the PayMyStudent portal to access funds from the Vulnerable Bursary.

The College will only claim the required amount based on the individual students need from the ESFA for the academic year. Where no need is identified the student may not receive any funds and no claims will be made by the College.

4c. Free College Meals

Scope

Offer a free college meal to all qualifying students aged between 16 to 18 years old and students aged 19 to 24 who are subject to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan)

Eligibility for Free College Meals

Students whose families are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits will receive a free college meal:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related employment Allowance
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,000 pa
- In receipt of the guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit only (not in receipt of Working Tax Credit element) and have an annual gross income no more than £16,900 as assessed by the HMRC

Eligibility for Free College Meal is identified through the student's on-line application through PayMyStudent. Students are allocated a daily value, pre-loaded onto their college ID card which can be used to purchase food from any of the outlets in college.

If the student does not have their ID card at the time of purchase, we are unable to offer them a free college meal. The student can obtain a new card from the IT Helpdesk which will be registered on to the meal recording system and activated for them immediately.

Free College Meals allocation will be paid directly to students who are attending a work placement during the regular school calendar day.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ALL BURSARIES AND FREE COLLEGE MEALS.

All students are invited to make an application via the online platform PayMyStudent.

<https://richardhuish.paymystudent.com>

So that a full financial assessment can be made by the Student Finance Team students must:

- Fully complete the on-line application form
- Provide the necessary evidence of the household income/benefits.
- Provide evidence of travel tickets
- Submit a completed and signed on-line application.

Upon receipt of the student's application containing the necessary evidence, a financial assessment is carried out to establish eligibility by the bursary team.

If eligible an award is allocated for the above categories listed in section 4. Course costs are calculated using information provided by Course Managers. Students will be notified when the application has been approved via letter sent to the student's college email. This award letter clearly outlines the level of support they have been awarded for each category and the college's expectations for them in order to continue to receive the award.

An element of their bursary award is made available through the college on-line shop and is paid directly to the department.

Bursary awards are paid directly to the student via the BACS system for books and essential equipment not available through the college shop and upon evidence of a purchase.

6. Attendance Requirements & Monitoring

Students in receipt of a Bursary are required to attend their timetabled lessons attaining a minimum level of 85%. Absences due to college approved trips or work experience will not be counted negatively in this percentage. Any student who falls below this level may have their support suspended. Withheld payments are monitored on a regular basis; once a student's attendance meets the required 85% attendance payment is released and paid in the next monthly payment run.

7. Appeals Procedure

If a student has had a payment withheld and believes our decision is wrong or feel that the level of support they have been awarded is incorrect, they can make an appeal by emailing the Director of Student Services clearly stating the reasons for their appeal.

7a. Grounds for Appeal

Eligibility – A student will be turned down for financial assistance if they do not meet the eligibility criteria. Our letter clearly explains why this decision has been made. If the student believes they meet the eligibility criteria, they will be required to explain why they feel they qualify in writing and provide additional evidence to support their appeal.

Level of support - If a student is making an appeal against the level of support they have been offered, they will be required to explain why they feel they may be entitled to additional support in writing and provide us with additional evidence to support their appeal.

All applications will receive careful consideration and an appeal is not likely to be successful unless they can provide the necessary evidence to support their claim or any information not considered in the original assessment.

7b. Procedure¹

If the student decides that they have grounds to make an appeal, they must write to the Director of Student Services within 14 days of receipt of the allocation or letter of decline.

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The original application, appeal and any other information the student supplies to us will be given fresh consideration. The appeal will be dealt with within 15 working days by a panel consisting of the Bursary Co-ordinator, College Services Manger, the student's tutor (who will represent their interests) and the Director of Student Services. The student will be advised of the outcome in writing.

8. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually.