

Author | Matt Nolan

Contributors | Mel Winsbrow

Version | 1

Pages |

Publication Date | June 2025

Last Review Date |

Next Review Date | June 2026

## RICHARD HUISH COLLEGE

# BURSARIES AND FREE COLLEGE MEAL POLICY

### CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Policy Statement
- 3 Scope
- 4 Types of Financial Support
  - 4a - 16-19 discretionary Bursary
  - 4b – Vulnerable Bursary
  - 4c – Free College Meals
- 5 Application Process
- 6 General Attendance Requirements & Monitoring
- 7 Appeals Procedure
  - 7a – Grounds of Appeal
  - 7b – Appeals Procedure
- 8 Review of Policy

## 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 via PayMyStudent and assess eligibility.
- 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 essential program of study (as outlined by the College) 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 on ESFA-funded programmes, full or part time, whose household income is below the college threshold or who receive income-related benefits, may apply for the Discretionary Bursary

## 4. Types of Support Available

### 4a. DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

- Students aged 16 or over but under 19 on the 31<sup>st</sup> August of the year they enrol at Richard Huish College to be eligible for an award.
- 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, using public transport only.
- 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 as determined by the College.
- A contribution to musical lessons for students studying one of the listed music courses
- Support towards additional expenses/emergencies which may occur during the year if funding allows
- Help towards the cost of attending university open days (if using public transport) and the UCAS application fee.

- Help towards the cost of meals where students are not eligible for Free School Meals where the household income is below £30,000 gross per annum.
- In addition to the above financial support the 16-19 Bursary will loan essential technology needed (as determined by the College) to assist students learning. This will remain the property of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, allowing future students to benefit from the purchase.

#### **4b. VULNERABLE BURSARY**

The vulnerable bursary of £1200 covers the cost of essential items and support needed for students to participate in their education, including transport, clothing, books, and equipment. It's designed to help students who are in need of financial assistance and meet certain eligibility criteria, such as being in care or receiving benefits.

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 confirmation of the student's status from a relevant agency working with the young person (eg social worker) 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

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 activated for them immediately.

Free College Meals allocation will be paid directly to students who are attending a work placement during the regular College 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.
- Submit a completed and signed on-line application.

Course costs are calculated using information provided by Course Managers. Students and parents/carers 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 (behaviour and attendance) for them in order to continue to receive the award.

Bursary awards are paid directly to the student/parent 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. Absences due to college approved trips or work experience will not be counted negatively. Any student who falls below our expectations may have their support held. Withheld payments are monitored on a regular basis; once a student's attendance meets the required 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 Vice Principal: Student Experience 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.

# huish | POLICIES

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 Manager, the student's tutor (who will represent their interests) and the Vice Principal: Student Experience. The student will be advised of the outcome in writing.

## **8. Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

The Bursary Terms and Conditions will be sent to students, parents, carers with the letter confirming eligibility. They can also be found on the website – Bursaries and Finance.

