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RICHARD HUISH COLLEGE

BURSARIES AND FREE COLLEGE MEAL POLICY



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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:

- a. 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, social media and other literature.
- b. Process applications and assess eligibility quickly and fairly via PayMyStudent.
 - c. Monitor and review the use of 16-19 Bursary funding regularly.
 - d. Ensure the 16-19 Bursary is distributed in line with government Guidance
 - e. Assist with completion of online applications for students where needed.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The 16-19 Discretionary, Vulnerable Bursary and Free College Meals funds are provided by the Department for Education.

These funds are awarded to assist students with the costs associated with completing their study programme (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 Department for Education funded programmes, full or part time, whose household income is below the college threshold may apply for the Discretionary Bursary.

4. Types of Support Available

4a. DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

- Students should be aged 16 or over but under 19 on the 31st 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 Department for Education funding regulations for post-16 provision (and therefore meet the residency criteria for bursary funding eligibility)
- Students should be registered on a Department for Education 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, during term time 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.
- Help towards the cost of attending university open days (if using public transport).
- 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 net 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 (Department of Education)

The vulnerable bursary covers up to £1200 for 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 need financial assistance and meet the eligibility criteria, such as being in care or receiving benefits.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

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

The College requires written confirmation of the students' status from a relevant agency working with the young person (e.g. 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 Dept for Education~~ 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(Department of Education)

All students whose household is in receipt of Universal Credit are now eligible for a free college meal, provided by the Department for Education, to the value of £2.66. For those students who are also eligible for the bursary, this will be topped up to £5 per day. All meal values are loaded onto the student ID card and this can be used as a contactless payment card at any of the outlets around the campus.

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 link here: [Richard Huish College](#)

For a full financial assessment to be made by the Student Finance Team students must:

- a. Fully complete the on-line application form
- b. Provide the necessary evidence of the household income/benefits.
- c. 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 to continue to receive the award.

5a. Income assessment

How we assess your income:

- I. We ask you to declare all income; this includes but is not limited to: employment, self-employment, limited company, dividends, interest on savings, income from property, income from pensions and all benefits claimed.
- II. We will ask you to provide proof of the above income in the form of official statements/letters confirming income received in the previous financial year.
- III. If Universal Credit is claimed, we will ask you to provide 3 recent monthly statements in full, as a pdf.
- IV. In the case of any other benefits claimed, a letter confirming that the benefit is claimed will be required.
- V. In the case of self-employment/limited company/partnership; full accounts **and** a tax return/statement for the previous financial year will be requested as evidence. In the case of Directorship/Partnership, all drawings/wages/profits should be declared.
- VI. If your circumstances have changed since the previous financial year, please state the change in writing to bursary@richuish.ac.uk and they will advise accordingly.
- VII. If your circumstances change mid-year, please advise bursary@richuish.ac.uk in writing and they will advise accordingly.
- VIII. If your circumstances do not fall under any of the above income categories listed in I. above, please email bursary@richuish.ac.uk for further advice.

To calculate your income we take the above list (i) into account and deduct any tax or NI paid.

III and IV are not calculated as income but do need to be recorded.

Please be aware that giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect/overpayment may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered. This could result in a referral to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their family facing prosecution.

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 withheld. 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. Withheld Payment Appeals Procedure

If a student has had a payment withheld or believes 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.

8. How we Assess Income

- I. We ask you to declare all income; this includes but is not limited to: employment, self-employment, limited company, dividends, interest on savings, income from property, income from pensions and all benefits claimed.
- II. We will ask you to provide proof of the above income in the form of official statements/letters confirming income received in the previous financial year.
- III. If Universal Credit is claimed, we will ask you to provide 3 recent monthly statements in full, as a pdf.
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9. Grounds for Appeal

Eligibility – A student will be turned down for financial assistance if they do not meet the eligibility criteria. Our letter will clearly explain 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.

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 Student Finance Lead, Operations Manager, the student's tutor (who will represent their interests) and the Vice Principal: Student Experience. The student will be advised of the outcome by email. 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.

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the current terms and conditions which can be found here:

[Discretionary-Bursary-Terms-and-Conditions-2067-27.pdf](#)

[Free-College-Meals-FCM-Terms-and-Conditions-2026-20271.pdf](#)

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 under Bursaries and Finance.