



THOMAS ROTHERHAM COLLEGE

A tradition of achievement - A future of opportunity

POLICY DOCUMENT 2016-17

16 – 19 BURSARY FUND

FREE MEALS IN FE

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Student Bursary Funds/Further Education Free Meals is to:

- Support and help young people to meet the costs of education and training post 16
- Ensure that young people can participate in and benefit from a place in 16 – 19 education and training
- Provide free meals to disadvantaged 16 – 18 year old students in further education

2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- The bursary is awarded on need, attendance, punctuality, effort and behaviour
- Bursary rules are applied fairly and consistently and in line with our commitment to equality of opportunity
- Free meals are provided for all eligible, disadvantaged students
- The application process is easily understood and accessible
- The application process identifies eligible students in a timely fashion
- The scheme is designed to maximise the amount of funds available to support students

The bursary is not used to promote Thomas Rotherham College

3. SUPPORT

Further Education Free Meals – the College will provide a meal free of charge to all eligible students.

16 – 19 Bursary Funds - support will be awarded according to need, but will be broadly prioritised into the following categories:

Category 1:

- Travel to College (but excluding the journey between the Rotherham Bus Station and the College, unless there are exceptional circumstances)
- Essential trips and visits

Category 2:

- Essential materials and equipment. (These will remain the property of the college)
- Other expenses associated with study

Category 3:

- Free meals (breakfast or lunch) from the College's catering service

In addition to the 16-19 Bursary Fund (including the Vulnerable Bursary), the College provides support for:

- 16-19 Childcare (Care to Learn)
- Further Education Free Meals

Detailed information and guidance relating to the above is available from Student Services.

4. ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

16 - 19 Bursary/Further Education Free Meals

To be eligible students must be aged over 16 and under 19* on 31st August 2016

**(Students aged 19+ who have an Education Health Care Plan can access 16 – 19 Bursary. Students aged 19+ are not eligible for a Vulnerable Bursary).*

- **Priority 1:** Vulnerable Students, who are defined as:
 - In care/care leavers
 - In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name
 - Disabled and in receipt of **both** Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit **and** Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own name.
 - Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children aged under 18.
- **Priority 2:** All students who received free school meals during Y11 at school or whose household income is below £16,190.
- **Priority 3:** All students who are not already classified as Priority 2, who have a household income below £21,000
- **Priority 4:** Students with a household income below £25,000. Provided funds are available after the receipt and consideration of Priority 1 – 3 applications (and allowing for ongoing Priority 2/3 applications), the college may call for Priority 4 applications during October/November 2016 with support for travel, followed by free meals being the main priorities.

Application Deadlines

Priority 1 applications	no deadline
Priority 2 and 3 applications	7 th October 2016
Priority 4	31 st October 2016 onwards (provided funds are available)

5. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

When assessing income, Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments paid to the student are disregarded. However, the element paid for mobility may be considered as income when assessing transport costs.

Students of sixth form age who previously received travel support via their Local Authority will need to reapply to the local authority in the first instance. See Transport Policy Statement Learners 16 – 19 in Further Education, available from Education Transport on 01709 822649 or email education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk for more information. Continuing post 16 learners will also have their transport needs reviewed on an annual basis.

Learners with limited mobility may be entitled to apply for a Disabled Persons Pass. The Disabled Persons Pass allows free travel on bus, train and tram within South Yorkshire and some cross boundary services. More information is available on travelsouthyorkshire.com or by calling Traveline on 01709 515151.

Students aged 19+ with an Education Health Care Plan may be supported with the cost of transport subject to the following conditions.

- The student is not entitled to LA support/Disabled Person's Pass
- The student is not receiving support for transport costs from another source
- The student cannot travel independently

6. APPLYING FOR SUPPORT

Applications must be made using the standard application form available from Student Services/College website.

All applications must have the relevant supporting documentary evidence included.

Students will be informed in writing (within 15 working days) of the outcome of their application.

No assistance will be paid to or on behalf of a learner until they are enrolled as a student at the College.

Funding is only for one year. Students must reapply for funding at the start of each consecutive academic year where a programme is for more than one year in duration (i.e. year 1 of a 2 year course)

7. DEFINING HARDSHIP

All personal circumstances and any available information will be taken into consideration when establishing need. Applicants will be expected to investigate all avenues of support before applying to the Bursary Fund e.g. Care to Learn, Tax Credits etc.

8. ATTENDANCE & BEHAVIOUR CONDITIONS

Attendance:

Support from the Bursary Fund is conditional upon satisfactory attendance of at least 90% for all subjects.

Although an average of 90% attendance is regarded as satisfactory, the College may take into account all personal circumstances when determining satisfactory attendance, therefore, Support Managers/Tutors may, in exceptional circumstances, present a case where they consider the attendance pattern to be 'satisfactory' and therefore eligible for support due to extenuating circumstances.

Unsatisfactory attendance will be brought to the attention of the Admin Manager Staff and Student Support and following investigation support may be withdrawn.

Behaviour:

Support from the Bursary Fund is conditional upon satisfactory behaviour. Students entering the formal stages of the disciplinary/misconduct process may have their support suspended or withdrawn.

9. STUDENTS WHO WITHDRAW

If a student withdraws from their studies before completion, the College may request repayment of any previously allocated funds and/or the return of any items of equipment provided through the Bursary Fund.

10. INCOME ASSESSMENT & EVIDENCE

To qualify for support, students or parents/carers must provide the following evidence:

16-19 Students:

Priority 1: Vulnerable Student evidence:

A letter from DWP or documentation proving that the young person is in receipt of the qualifying benefit(s) listed under Section 4 above and confirming that they can participate in further education or training.

Priority 2:

Documentation, clearly stating the student's eligibility for **free school meals** during their Y11 GCSE year or appropriate evidence to show that household income is below £16,190.

Priority 3:

Appropriate evidence to show that household income is below £21,000

Priority 4:

Appropriate evidence to show that household income is below £25,000

ELIGIBILITY

- Eligibility is determined by gross household income of the student, their partner, or parents/guardians and/or carers living at one address. Income of siblings and student's personal part time earnings of up to £30 per week will be disregarded.
- Where there are **additional** dependant children in the home (for whom Child Benefit is being paid), a deduction of £1,500 per child will be taken from the gross household income to give an adjusted gross household income. This will then be used to determine eligibility.

(i.e. a gross household income of £22,000 pa where there are two additional dependants (3 children in total) will take the adjusted gross income to £19,000 pa).

- Where a student's living circumstances are unusual e.g. living with a friend, grandparents or siblings, cases will be assessed individually.
- Accompanied Asylum Seeking Children may receive in-kind support (ie. books, equipment, travel provided their application has not been refused).

Students are required to inform the Admin Manager Staff and Student Support of any change in their home/financial circumstances. Occasionally it may be necessary to carry out eligibility checks where students are receiving continuous funding. If income is above the threshold, support will be withdrawn.

Income Evidence

Income will be assessed on current (gross) salary and/or benefits into the household. Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments will be disregarded when assessing income however; the element paid (to the student) for mobility may be considered as income when assessing transport costs.

Any relevant evidence available and dated within the last three months may be used, for example:

- Benefit books
- Tax Credit Award Notification
- Letters from DWP/pension authorities/Job Centre
- Last 3 months' salary slips (if paid monthly)
- Last 4 weeks' wage slips (if paid weekly)
- Latest annual accounts for those who are self-employed

Where there is a significant change to household income during the academic year (i.e. due to redundancy), and income falls to within the income thresholds listed, an application for support may be submitted.

Where a student or their parent/guardian/partner is unwilling to provide evidence, no assessment can take place therefore, support will not be available.

Where a student is unable to provide the required evidence for legitimate reasons, an assessment will be made using any available evidence and taking into account the student/family circumstances.

Where a student lives with a parent and a partner (not second parent) the total household income of both partners will be taken into account.

11. PAYMENTS & ALLOCATIONS

Payments will usually be made in the form of goods and services with the exception of 16-19 Priority 1 applicants who (after deductions for travel costs, meals etc) may receive a monthly payment. Only in exceptional cases are payments made by cash or cheque to applicants in Priorities 2 – 4.

Payments are made in the following ways:

- For equipment and materials or trips, payments are made to a supplier/agent on the student's behalf.
- In respect of travel passes or vouchers the full cost or a contribution is made to SYPTTE on a termly or annual basis on the student's behalf.
- In respect of free meals, students will be issued with a Lunch Card. Costs for students undertaking work placement will be covered by voucher or (in exceptional circumstances) cash.

12. APPEALS FOR ALL SCHEMES

Applicants refused support or whose support has been withdrawn due to breach of the 90% attendance at all subjects or behaviour issues, have the right of appeal. This appeal should be made to the Vice Principal Finance and Resources within 10 days of the College's decision. The reason for appeal must be given and any supporting documentation or information must be provided. This will be dealt with in accordance with the College appeals procedures.

13. VALIDATING THE SCHEME

Eligibility for support will be checked at the initial application stage.

It may be necessary to carry out eligibility checks where students are receiving continuous funding.

Attendance checks may be authorised by the Admin Manager Staff and Student Support to ensure eligibility for continued support.

Systems and procedures are in place to ensure that all Funds are managed appropriately and effectively and they are subject to both internal and external audit.

Any student found to have made a false claim for financial support, or anyone who disregards the

conditions for assistance may be subject to the College's Disciplinary Procedure and a repayment of the funds will be sought.

All applications for support must be approved by the Admin Manager Staff and Student Support.

Students must provide current (within the last three months) documentary evidence as required.

Where staff suspect that all is not in order i.e. non-disclosure of income, tampering of evidence etc support will be withheld.

Payments may be refused, suspended or reclaimed where students fail to meet the conditions of assistance.

14. EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPORT

The success of financial support offered to students will be measured by analysing student retention and achievement. In addition, to canvas learner views specific questions relating to financial support for students will be asked as part of the College's quality monitoring processes.