

MIDKENT COLLEGE

STUDENT BURSARY

POLICY

2024/2025

INTRODUCTION

Midkent College receives allocations of funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to support eligible students to meet the cost of participating in Education. The College sets its criteria for funding in accordance with the guidelines provided by the ESFA.

POLICY AIMS

This policy aims to help students, to determine their eligibility for financial support from the College's Bursary Funds, which are available to assist them with their costs to participate in further education and to detail the level of support provided and conditions the college has set for the bursary whilst complying with the eligibility requirements and funding rules set out by the Education and Skills Funding Agency ESFA.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Financial Support is available to students with a low household income to help them overcome any individual financial barriers they may face participating at college. The funds can help with course essentials such as: travel, equipment, Compulsory UK trips that are essential to your study programme, uniform, childcare, and free college meals.

All students aged 16 and over and who meet the residency criteria set out in national funding guidance and are studying an ESFA funded course are eligible to apply. Waged apprentices are not eligible.

Should an applicant withdraw from their chosen course of study and decide to leave College, they may be required to repay monies or return equipment supplied/brought by the support fund.

To be eligible you must be:

Eligibility is based on age, residence, household income and in case of travel, distance travelled from home to campus of study. The college eligibility criteria are reviewed and updated annually based on ESFA published guidelines for that year.

- Enrolled on a Department for Education (DfE) funded course at MidKent College
- Able to prove a household income under £32,000. If your income is between £32,000-£34,000 we will assist with travel ONLY. The College may also be able to assist students where the household has recently experienced a significant change in financial circumstances. Such changes might include but are not limited to; redundancy, family break up or bereavement of a household member.
- The college may choose to use discretion where household income exceeds this amount but a need for support has been identified.
- Living in the county of Kent.

Who is not eligible?

- Students who are on employer responsive courses, waged apprenticeships, or Higher Education courses*
- Students who are in custody and have been released on a temporary licence to study.
- Students who are mandated to study under a government work scheme.

*Students who are studying Higher Education courses should apply for support through Student Finance England (<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>)

To maintain eligibility for financial support students must consistently have attendance of 90% or above of timetabled lessons and adhere to behavioural agreements.

THE 16-18 DISCRETIONARY BURSARY AND THE 19+ DISCRETIONARY LEARNER SUPPORT FUND

Discretionary funds can support students with essential equipment, uniform, UK compulsory trips and childcare. The level of support available will be dependent on the course requirements as set by the Head of Department.

To assess your household income, we require one or more of the following:

- A Tax Credit Award notice dated after **April 2024** (all pages)
- A P60 issued by current employer dated **April 2024**
- Last three months' payslips if paid monthly or 4 weekly, last 6 payslips if paid fortnightly or last 12 payslips if paid weekly.
- Photocopies of benefit award letters dated after **April 2024**
- Details of accounts or HMRC Tax Return for previous Tax year in the case of self-employment.

- Universal Credit Award showing all payments, details of who are claimed for and deductions for the last 3 months.
- Child benefit
- Council tax benefit award letter.
- Housing benefit award letter.

Equipment will be supplied through the College and there is no cash alternative. If you are applying for financial assistance, please wait for the outcome of your application before purchasing course equipment. Regrettably, we are unable to offer refunds.

Travel

Students may be eligible for travel support if they meet the household income criteria and live more than 1.5 miles from the College campus (measured using Google Maps walking directions).

Travel support is provided in the form of a bus pass or train warrant available from the campus. The student remains liable for their travel costs until an award is agreed and reimbursement for travel costs before this time is not offered. If a bus pass is lost there will be a replacement fee of £15. We will only replace one bus pass per student per academic year.

Students with additional transport needs as a direct result of a disability, learning difficulty or ill health should liaise with the Local Authority to see whether help is available. Where the Local Authority does not provide these services or charges for them, and the student fulfils the income criteria the College may be able to provide assistance.

Free College Meals

Students aged 16-18 or aged 19-25 with a valid EHCP at the beginning of the academic year who live in a household that is in receipt of one of the benefits below are entitled to free college meals for each of the days they attend study or activity that is part of their course.

If the household income is below £16,190 the bursary will contribute towards the cost of food whilst at college. All applications for financial support will automatically be assessed for Free College Meals.

- Income support
- Income based job seekers allowance.
- Income related Employment Support Allowance.
- Support under part IV of the immigration Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed Element of 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 witnessed by His Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- 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.
- Housing benefit award letter.
- Council tax award letter.

Meals will be supplied through the college's catering outlets.

Young people with caring responsibilities

Young people with caring responsibilities are encouraged to apply for the bursary. We ensure confidentiality with all applications. Please use the links below to access information.

Carers UK, [Support for young carers | Carers UK](#)

Sidekick Action for children. [What financial support can I get as a young carer? - Sidekick by Action for Children.](#)

Carers first. [Grants to support you as a young carer | Carers First](#)

Childcare Support for Students Aged Under 20

Students under 20 and in need of childcare assistance should apply through the Care to Learn Scheme, please contact the Care to Learn Helpline for more information on 0800 121 8989 or apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>. Care to Learn can also help with the cost of transport to and from the chosen childcare provider.

Childcare Support for Students Aged 20 and Over

If you are not eligible for support through other childcare schemes and you fulfil the income criteria the College may cover reasonable childcare costs.

The discretionary funds can only pay childcare during term time and do not cover costs during holidays or half terms or pay retainers during these times: all costs are paid direct to the provider monthly in arrears.

A maximum of £60 per full day and £35 per half day and £20 for after school clubs per child is available and is only payable for the hours/days that you are in college or on placement. Costs accrued outside of college hours or where lessons are not attended remain the responsibility of the student and the main contract remains between the student and their childcare provider. To be eligible for funding, your childminder or nursery must hold a current OFSTED inspection at Grade 3 (Requires Improvement) or above, you can find out more here <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>. Once eligibility is established the College will contact the student and the chosen childcare provider with further information and an agreement to be signed by both parties. Payment for childcare will be made direct to the childcare provider and will not be released unless signed college agreements are in place with both the student and the childcare provider.

As we must ensure all available funds from alternative agencies are exhausted before we can aid, any Government funded sessions (for 2/3/4-year-olds) must be used on the student's college days. The maximum award for childcare per student per year is £8,700.

Students remain liable for any childcare costs accrued until an award has been confirmed in writing by the College and signed agreements have been received from both the student and the childcare provider.

Other Useful Information

Tax Credits Information including ordering a copy if you have lost your Tax Credits Award Notice

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/payments-entitlement/other-benefits/proof.htm>

Job Centre Plus Information, (contact your nearest Job Centre Plus for a benefits statement)

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment/jobseekers/contactjobcentreplus/dg_186347

Care To Learn

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/MoneyToLearn/Caretolearn/index.htm>

Pension Credit Information

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/PensionCredit/DG_10018692

Benefits Advice <http://www.turn2us.org.uk>

HOW DO I APPLY?

Please complete the online application through the following link.

<https://midkent.paymystudent.com/portal/>

Contact Student Financial Support on 01634 383300 if you require help to complete the form.

WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?

We strongly recommend that you apply before the course starts as applications received on or after the 17th of August may take up to 14 working days to process. Funds are limited and provided on a first come first served basis.

HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED OF THE OUTCOME?

We aim to assess your application within 14 working days, and we will inform you of the outcome in writing via email and/or letter. If eligible you will be sent an Award Notification giving details of your award with a breakdown of how the award will be received. Funding is not guaranteed until you have received an official Award Notification.

FRAUD

Any application which is found to be fraudulent i.e., through false representation of household income or of other eligibility rules may be cancelled and the learner may be subject to disciplinary measures by the College.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

Students must maintain an attendance of 90% or above during their course and adhere to any behavioural agreements to be entitled to discretionary funds. Attendance is calculated by lesson and students should monitor the marking of their registers using Pro Portal (Student Financial Support are unable to change register marks).

The student is responsible for informing Student Financial Support of any change of circumstances, e.g., change of course, change of hours, change of childcare arrangements, or change of personal details. Failure to do so may result in the non-receipt of funds or a request for repayment.

Where a student is in receipt of childcare support, attendance will be monitored, and non-attendance will result in the student being liable to the childcare provider for costs incurred during periods of non-attendance.

Equipment paid for by the funds remains the property of MidKent College and students may be requested to return non-perishable/reusable items to the College for redistribution at the end of their course.

WHAT IF MY APPLICATION IS UNSUCCESSFUL?

If you believe your application has been incorrectly assessed, you have the right to appeal. Your appeal must be in writing and should include details of the additional information you would like us to consider.

Please address appeals to: Student Financial Support, MidKent College, Medway Campus, Medway Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 1FN

16-18 VULNERABLE BURSARY

The 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary enables us to help students, from nominated vulnerable groups, with the costs associated with studying at college.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Students from the following nominated groups may be eligible for a Vulnerable Bursary. This is based on a 30-week course, if your course is only for a few hours a week, runs for less than 30 weeks or your local authority cover your travel costs this amount will be reduced.

- Young people in care
- Care leavers.
- Young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit and Tenancy agreement.
- Young people in receipt of Disability Allowance or Personal Independence Payments, Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Tenancy agreement.

Eligibility does not guarantee that an award will be made.

WHO CANNOT APPLY?

You will not be eligible for assistance if you are:

- under 16 years old on 31 August 2024
- Not entitled to public funds.
- over 19 years old on 31 August 2024
- do not fall into one of the nominated groups listed above.

However, you may be able to apply for a bursary under the discretionary Learner Support Fund

What can the Vulnerable Bursary help with?

Materials

The Vulnerable Bursary can be used to purchase essential equipment, uniform, and compulsory UK trips that are essential to your study programme.

Travel

The Vulnerable Bursary can be used to cover your local travel costs.

To be eligible for help with transport you must:

- be using public transport.
- not be eligible for assistance from your local authority or only eligible for subsidised travel: in the case of subsidised travel, the College may agree to pay the supplement or provide an alternative suitable travel pass. If a bus pass is lost there will be a replacement fee of £15. We will only replace one bus pass per student per year.
- a proportion of the bursary may be put aside for travel to and from universities where a student is going on visits or interviews prior to university entry.
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Free Meals

The Vulnerable Bursary will be used to pay for a meal whilst you are at college. A daily allowance will be added to your student ID card for each day shown on your college timetable. This will allow you to pay electronically for a meal in the College refectory.

Trips

Compulsory UK trips that are essential to your study programme.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Students who are eligible will be invited to discuss their individual circumstances with a member of the Student Financial Support Team.

To access the bursary, you will need to present official proof of your status within one of the nominated groups, this could be:

- a letter from local authority confirming CLA/ Care Leaver status.
- a benefits award letter confirming receipt of Income Support/Universal Credit in your own right and a Tenancy Agreement.
- a benefits award letter from Job Centre Plus and DWP confirming your receipt of PIP/DLA and ESA/UC in your own right and a Tenancy Agreement.

During this discussion you will work with the team member to decide how you would like to allocate your bursary: priority will be given to your travel, food and supporting materials for your course.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

Students **must maintain an attendance of 90%** or above during their course and adhere to behavioural agreements to be entitled to support funds. Attendance is calculated by lesson and students should monitor the marking of their registers using Pro Portal (Student Financial Support are unable to change register marks).

The student is responsible for informing Student Financial Support of any change of circumstances, e.g., change of course, change of hours, or change of personal details. Failure to do so may result in the non-receipt of funds or a request for repayment.

Equipment paid for by the funds remains the property of MidKent College and students may be requested to return non-perishable/reusable items to the College for redistribution at the end of their course.

19+ ADVANCED LEARNER LOAN BURSARY

The 19+ Advanced Learner Loans Bursary (19+ ALLB) is designed to support students from lower income households who have been approved for a 19+ Advanced Learning Loan and need additional financial support with the cost of transport and/or UK Compulsory trips and/or childcare.

The 19+ ALLB is awarded on a discretionary basis and due to its limited nature, meeting the criteria does not necessarily guarantee an award. The bursary fund is means tested and operates on a first come, first-served basis.

Limitations of the bursary fund

The bursary fund cannot be used to help with tuition and registration fees.

Eligibility

Students must have been approved for a 19+ Advanced Learner Loan before applying for the 19+ ALLB. Applications will be declined where a loan has not been approved.

Students need to have had a household income of less than £32,000 to be eligible. Household income between £32,000-£34,000 are eligible for Travel only. Income of any spouse or co-habiting partner will be taken into consideration.

Bursary Award

An award towards travel, UK compulsory trips may be available for those who qualify for assistance.

The 19+ ALLB may be able to help with transport if you live more than 1.5 miles from the campus you attend and fulfil the income criteria. The College can only assist students using public transport and will provide passes or travel warrants for rail or bus travel.

Childcare Award

The 19+ ALLB can only pay childcare during term time and do not cover costs during holidays or half terms nor are they able to pay retainers during these times: all costs are paid direct to the provider in arrears.

A maximum of £60 per full day and £35 per half day and £20 for after school clubs per child is available and is only payable for the hours/days that you are in college or on placement. Costs accrued outside of college hours or where lessons are not attended remain the responsibility of the student and the main contract remains between the student and their childcare provider. To be eligible for funding, your childminder or nursery must hold a current OFSTED inspection at Grade 3 (Requires Improvement) or above, you can find out more here <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>. Once

eligibility is established the College will contact the student and the chosen childcare provider with further information and an agreement to be signed by both parties. Payment for childcare will be made direct to the childcare provider and will not be released unless signed college agreements are in place with both the student and the childcare provider.

As we must ensure all available funds from alternative agencies are exhausted before we can help, any Government funded sessions (for 2/3/4-year-olds) must be used on the student's college days. The maximum award for childcare per student per year is £8,700.

Students remain liable for any childcare costs accrued until an award has been confirmed in writing by the College and signed agreements have been received from both the student and the childcare provider.

Other Useful Information

Tax Credits Information including ordering a copy if you have lost your Tax Credits Award Notice

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/payments-entitlement/other-benefits/proof.htm>

Job Centre Plus Information, (contact your nearest Job Centre Plus for a benefits statement)

http://direct.gov.uk/en/employment/jobseekers/contactjobcentreplus/dg_186347

Care To Learn

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/MoneyToLearn/Caretolearn/index.htm>

Pension Credit Information

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/PensionCredit/DG_10018692

Benefits Advice <http://www.turn2us.org.uk>

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WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?

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HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED OF THE OUTCOME?

We aim to assess your application within four weeks, and we will inform you of the outcome in writing via email and/or letter. If eligible you will be sent an Award Notification giving details of your award with a breakdown of how the award will be received. Funding is not guaranteed until you have received an official Award Notification.

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