

# MIDKENT COLLEGE

## STUDENT BURSARY POLICY

### 2025/2026

#### **POLICY AIMS**

MidKent College receives allocations of funds from the Department for Education to support eligible students to meet the cost of participating in Education. The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

The College sets its criteria for bursary funding in accordance with the eligibility requirements and funding rules set out by the Department for Education (DfE).

#### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund can help with course essentials such as travel, equipment, uniform, childcare, emergency meal support (short term award and reviewed for eligibility), Free College meals and compulsory UK trips that are essential to your study programme.

All students aged 16 and over and who meet the residency criteria set out in national funding guidance and are studying an DfE funded course are eligible to apply.

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.

**All applications are confidential.**

**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 DfE published guidelines for that year.

- Enrolled on a Department for Education (DfE) funded course at MidKent College
- Able to prove a household income under £35,000. 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.

## 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>)

**Financial support is subject to students maintaining the required expectations for attendance, behaviour and punctuality. The college reserves the right to temporarily withdraw any financial support if the requirements are not met.**

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

Discretionary funds may be able to support students with essential equipment, uniform, food, travel, UK compulsory trips and childcare. The level of support available will be dependent on the course requirements as set by the Head of Department. The bursary may be used to pay for a meal while you are in college. If eligible a daily allowance of £5 will be placed on your student ID card allowing you to pay electronically for a meal in college. The college reviews the amount mid-year and may adjust the amount given to students eligible for food allowance.

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

- A Tax Credit Award notice dated after **April 2025** (all pages)
- A P60 issued by current employer dated **April 2025**
- 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 2025**
- 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.

Receipt of bursary funding does not affect receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as IS, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or, generally Universal Credit. If a student is in receipt of DLA (or PIP) and ESA, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

**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. Should a train pass be lost, the college is unable to replace this, and it should be reported as lost to National Rail by following their policies.

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.

Bursary support is available to contribute to the costs of attending industry placements, or, at the college's discretion, to top-up to Care to Learn funding, where necessary and appropriate.

### **Limitations of the bursary fund**

The bursary fund cannot be used to help with, counselling, mentoring, extra tuition or support such as servicing laptops/tablets, extra-curricular activities that are not essential to the students' study programme or to provide living costs support.

### **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.

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. An 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.

### **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](#)

**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 for the Care to Learn Scheme. To apply for this, make an application to the 16-18 Discretionary bursary on the MidKent College website and select childcare support for those aged 16-20 when prompted. Care to Learn will pay up to £180 per child per week. 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 learner and the childcare provider.

Care to Learn can be claimed for independent study time where it is required as part of their study programme to complete coursework, undertake revision or homework, as agreed between the college and the student. Care to Learn will support time needed to undertake work experience and industry placements but only where these have been identified as an integral part of the study programme. Costs associated with independent study time, work experience and industry placements are included as part of the Care to Learn weekly maximum amount (£180 per child per week) and not as extra. You can get Care to Learn if all the following apply to you:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or have a legal right to live and study in England
- your course qualifies
- your childcare provider is appropriately registered with Ofsted.

More information is available 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 provided the total of the childcare and travel costs does not exceed the Care to Learn maximum weekly amount (£180 per child per week).

### **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](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment/jobseekers/contactjobcentreplus/dg_186347)

Pension Credit Information

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/PensionCredit/DG\\_10018692](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/PensionCredit/DG_10018692)

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

Medway Food Bank

<https://medway.foodbank.org.uk>

Maidstone Food Bank

<https://www.familyfoodbank.org/maidstone-ffb.html>

#### **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 15th 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, if we have all the correct evidence. If you do not have the correct evidence this may delay your application. 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?**

Financial support is subject to students maintaining the required expectations for attendance, behaviour and punctuality. The college reserves the right to temporarily withdraw any financial support if the requirements are not met. 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 updating personal details on Proportal and 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.

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.finance@midkent.ac.uk](mailto:student.finance@midkent.ac.uk), 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.** In some cases, a young person might meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups, but their participation costs are already met, or they have no relevant costs. In these circumstances as they have no costs, no financial support will be offered as it is not required.

### WHO CANNOT APPLY?

You will not be eligible for assistance if you are:

- under 16 years old on 31 August 2025
- Not entitled to public funds.
- over 19 years old on 31 August 2025
- 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 may be used to purchase essential equipment, uniform, and compulsory UK trips that are essential to your study programme.

#### Travel

The Vulnerable Bursary may 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: The bursary may be used for transport costs but does not replace the statutory transport duty local authorities have. 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.
- Should a train pass be lost, the college is unable to replace this, and it should be reported as lost to National Rail by following their policies.

## **Meals**

A student who meets the criteria for a defined vulnerable group bursary is not automatically eligible for a free meal. If you meet the criteria for Free College meals, 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.

## **Limitations of the bursary fund**

The bursary fund cannot be used to help with, counselling, mentoring, extra tuition or support such as servicing laptops/tablets, extra-curricular activities that are not essential to the students' study programme or to provide living costs support.

## **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?**

Financial support is subject to students maintaining the required expectations for attendance, behaviour and punctuality. The college reserves the right to temporarily withdraw any financial support if the requirements are not met. 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 updating personal details on Proportal and 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.

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## **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. The ALLB may be able to provide additional financial support with the cost of uniform, equipment, transport and/or UK Compulsory trips, professional membership fees, 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. If a learner is receiving any state benefits it is their responsibility to inform the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about any learner support they receive from the college, because DWP may decide the learner support payment may impact those benefits.

### **Limitations of the bursary fund**

The bursary fund cannot be used to help with, Counselling, mentoring, extra tuition or support such as servicing laptops/tablets, extra-curricular activities 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 £35,000 to be eligible. 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.

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### **WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?**

We strongly recommend that you apply before the course starts as applications received after the 15th of August may take up to 14 working days to process if we have all the correct evidence. If you do not have the correct evidence this may delay your application, 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. 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 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.

## **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?**

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The student is responsible for updating personal details on Proportal and 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 nonattendance.

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?**

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Student Financial Support, MidKent College, Medway Campus, Medway Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 1FN.