

Bursary Policy and Procedure 2026–27

1. Policy Statement

City of Bristol College provides bursary funds are designed to widen participation and to remove financial barriers, support attendance, and promote student wellbeing and achievement. Funds are awarded in accordance with the **Department for Education (DfE)** and **West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (WECA)** funding rules.

2. Scope of Funding

The College administers the following funds:

- Vulnerable Bursaries (16–18 & EHCP up to 24)
- Discretionary Bursaries (16–18 & EHCP up to 24)
- Free Meal Fund (16–18 & EHCP)
- Care to Learn (under 20)
- Loan Bursary Fund (19+ Advanced Learner Loan students)
- Discretionary Learner Support / Hardship Fund (19+ DfE/WECA students)

Awards are based on **financial need**, household income, course length, and travel distance. Students must provide evidence and agree to bursary conditions, including attendance.

All funds have published financial eligibility criteria which are also detailed on the bursary application forms.

For learners aged 16–18, bursary funding does not usually affect family entitlement to means-tested benefits. However, where a learner receives DLA, PIP, or ESA, this may affect parents' entitlement to certain benefits. Learners are responsible for informing the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) of any support received, as this may impact benefit entitlement.

3. Vulnerable Bursary

For eligible 16–18 students (and up to 24 with EHCP) who are:

- Are in care
- Are a Care Leaver

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- Financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their own right and in receipt of Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit

Awards up to **£1,200 per year**, based on need.

Covers essential study costs (travel, meals, books, equipment).

Does not cover living or enrichment costs.

4. Discretionary Bursary (16-18 & EHCP up to 24)

For students with household income below £30,250 or receiving means-tested benefits.

Covers essential study costs (travel, meals, books, equipment).

Does not cover living or enrichment costs

Maximum award: £3,000 per year.

Apprentices and waged learners are not eligible.

5. Free Meal Fund

For eligible 16-18 students (and EHCP students up to 24) receiving qualifying benefits.

- Universal Credit
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Provides a daily **meal allowance of £3.50** for timetabled days (lowest amount to be awarded **£2.61** standard rate aligned with government guidance).

Starts from approval date and is not backdated.

6. Care to Learn

Supports childcare costs for student parents **under 20** in publicly funded education. Pays up to **£160 per child per week** plus registration fees **capped at £80**.

Childcare must be Ofsted-registered. Applications are required each year and can only be backdated within **28 days** of course start. Payments depend on attendance. Summer retainers may be available.

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7. Loan Bursary Fund

19+ students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues and their institution considers they need the support to continue their participation.

For 19+ students funded by an **Advanced Learner Loan** with household income below **£32,000 household** or **£24,455 living independently**.

Supports accommodation, travel, course materials, equipment, childcare, Students must have loan approval and pass the **14-day attendance liability point**.

8. Discretionary Learner Support Fund (19+)

19+ students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues and their institution considers they need the support to continue their participation.

For students aged **19+** on DfE/WECA funded courses facing financial hardship.

Income thresholds: **£32,000 household** or **£24,455 living independently**.

Supports travel, childcare (age 20+), and essential course costs.

Students must use free childcare entitlements first. Childcare must be Ofsted-registered and within the £60 daily limits.

By exception, support may be given to help towards course tuition fees – this will be assessed on an individual case-by-case basis.

9. Travel Support

Available to bursary students living **over 3 miles** from campus.

May include bus passes, mileage, train fares, **taxi support** and work placement travel.

Students must confirm they do not receive mobility allowances and have applied for local authority support where relevant. Long-distance travel may be capped unless the course is specialist. Receipts may be required, (**capped at £7,000 per student**).

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Attendance Requirement

Awards depend on:

- Minimum **85% attendance**, or
- Meeting agreed targets, or
- Approved exceptional circumstances

10. Changes of Circumstances

Students must report changes affecting eligibility. Withdrawals may require repayment or return of equipment. False or incomplete information may lead to recovery of funds.

11. Unforeseen Emergency Support

The College will set aside an element of funding which will provide a safety net for genuine emergencies that cannot be foreseen or provided for in advance.

12. Application Process

Applications are made through Learner Support Fund and Bursary Team and assessed against eligibility criteria. Students receive written outcomes. Records are retained securely for **6 years**.

13. Appeals

Students may appeal in writing within **10 working days**. Appeals are reviewed by the College, with a written response within **10 working days**. Further complaints follow the College Complaints Procedure.

14. Linked Policies

- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement
- Financial Regulations
- Fees Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Compliments, Complaints & Feedback Policy and Procedure

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Version	
Approved By	Finance & Resources Committee
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Lead Officer	Director of Marketing, Admissions and Student Services
Senior Manager Responsible	Chief Operating Officer