

Learner Financial Support Policy

Valid from (academic year)	2025/2026
Next review (academic year)	2026/2027
Policy Owner	Director of Student Services
Committee approval	Resources
Policy & EIA Approval date	Polices remain valid until revoked or reviewed.
Board of governors' committee Approval date	Resources pending
Board approval necessary	
Date of Board approval	N/A

Contents

Student Financial Support Policy 2025-26.....	3
Purpose of the Bursary.....	3
Eligibility	3
Residency.....	4
Bursary offer for 2025-26	4
Vulnerable Bursary.....	4
Vulnerable Bursary – Ineligible Students	5
Discretionary Bursary.....	5
Free College Meals	5
Free meals transitional protection arrangements	5
Childcare	6
19+ Bursary	6
Level 3 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary.....	6
Payments	7
Help with fares	7
Equipment and Educational Trips.....	7
Equipment	8
Educational Trips	8
Outstanding Payments or Fines.....	8
Withdrawn Students	8
Appeals	8

Student Financial Support Policy 2025-26

Stanmore College receives an allocation of funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) annually to provide financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can take part in or continue in education.

The College has a defined bursary resource and students are encouraged to enquire and where eligible, make an application for the relevant bursary at the earliest opportunity to ensure they receive maximum financial benefit from this provision.

Purpose of the Bursary

A Student Bursary is in place to support students with the costs of study, for example, books, materials, essential educational trips, meals, fares to college etc.

Bursary applications can be affected by two major factors, 1.the number of applications received, 2. Individual circumstances and actual financial need. Bursary funds will not be used to support general living costs, non-essential trips, or to provide general subsidies unrelated to specific student need.

Stanmore College currently adopts a bespoke system for payments for the variation in students. Currently there are 2 main types of learners.

1. On-site students (learning is based at the main site of Stanmore College at Elm Park)
2. External students (learning is delivered in offsite locations – for example: satellite centres)

Eligibility

A student must be aged 16 or over, but under 19 as of 31 August 2025 to be eligible for help from the 16 to 19 bursary funds during academic year 2025-26.

Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are employed rather than in education so they are not eligible for the 16 to 19 bursary fund and must seek another fund/grant.

Students aged 19 or over as of 31 August 2025 are only eligible to receive the 16 – 19 Discretionary Bursary if they are continuing a study programme, they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Students aged 19 or over as of 31 August 2025 are not eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary.

Students aged 19 or over may still be able to apply for financial support dependent on household income based on a needs assessment.

Receipts for purchases made using bursary funds must be provided periodically, and students will be asked to confirm funds were used for their intended purpose

Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in [ESFA funding regulations](#) for post-16 provision for the academic year 2025-26.

Students must have the legal right to funds in the United Kingdom at the start of the study programme. Any Student/Persons subject to Home Office deportation are ineligible.

Stanmore College recognises that all European Economic (EEA) student's resident before January 2021 have the legal right to remain in the UK for the duration of their course programme.

Bursary offer for 2025-26

16-18 year old students

- Vulnerable Bursary - up to a maximum of £1200, dependent on assessment of need. **Flat-rate awards** (e.g. always awarding £1,200 to vulnerable students) are not allowed.
- Discretionary Bursary to help with discretionary meals, travel, books, equipment or special kit over the academic year

All bursary awards, including for students in vulnerable groups, will be based on **individual assessments of actual participation costs**, such as travel, equipment, or meals.

Vulnerable Bursary

Vulnerable Bursaries are available for up to £1200 for courses and are designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation in Education., Institutions must ensure the funds go to those who genuinely need them. No student will automatically be awarded a set amount of funding without an assessment of the level of need, therefore applicants will need to provide evidence to support their claim for transport, meals, or equipment up to the value of £1200.

To be eligible for this bursary, students must be either:

- In Care /Foster Care
- Care leavers
- Receiving Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own right, to financially support themselves and / or some who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DSA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) as well as receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) again in their own right.

Funding claims for bursaries for defined vulnerable groups will be submitted via DfE Sign-In within the specified claim windows, and only once eligibility and need are fully evidenced. The dates for VB claims will be Sep–Nov, Jan–Feb, May–Jul.

Vulnerable Bursary – Ineligible Students

- Students attending specialist residential provision that covers education costs in full.
- Students undertaking distance learning programme that has no financial barriers for Travel/Meal Costs
- Students in the care of Local Authority where educational costs are covered by the local authority.
- Student who are financially supported by a partner or relative.

Discretionary Bursary

To be eligible for this bursary, students must live with parent(s), guardians, carers where the household income is below £35000 pa:

Free College Meals

Students aged 16 – 18 on the 31st of August 2025 who are eligible to receive a meal allowance will receive it for timetabled days to attend college. Students aged 19 and over are only eligible to receive the meal allowance if they are continuing on a study programme, they began aged 16 to 18 (referred to as 19+ continuers). They may also be eligible if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The FCM allowance is £3.50 which is credited to the Students ID card to be used in the college canteen. The canteen offers meal deals to this value, any further expenditure will be met by the student. The daily value does not roll over if not used.

Students studying at satellite centres can apply for the meal allowance, which is payable to their account at daily rate of £3.50. The meal allowance will be paid to students for timetabled days and based on attendance.

In cases of severe hardship, the College may provide temporary meal support without full income assessment, following internal evidence and safeguarding procedures.

Free meals transitional protection arrangements

If a student had free meals at school or College last academic year they can continue to receive these provided they can show evidence such as their parents national insurance number or the statement from their previous school/college confirming that they were in the receipt of free school meal. Where applicable, students continuing from a prior year will also have to provide a signed self-declaration confirming there has been no change in their financial circumstances.

Childcare

Students who are parents, aged under 20 on the 31st August with childcare needs, can apply for support through the Care to Learn scheme via the College.

19+ Bursary

To be eligible the student must be aged 19 or over on the 31st of August at the start of the academic year with a gross household income of less than £35000.

The College may be able to support with exam fees, registration fees, travel, childcare and ICT support based on need.

All awards are based on an individual assessment of need for the course the student is on.

Level 3 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary

Whether you qualify for an Advanced Learner Loan depends on your:

- age
- course
- college or training provider
- nationality or residency status You must be 19 or older on the first day of your course.

Your course must be:

- a Level 3,4,5 or 6 qualifications, for example A Levels or graduate certificate
- at an approved college or training provider in England

Further guidance can be obtained at <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan/bursary-fund>

Evidence required

- Tax Credit Award Notice 2025-26 - All pages
- Universal Credit –All pages of statements [including breakdown calculations and deductions] covering the last **3 months**

If you are not in receipt of the Tax Credits or Universal Credit, please supply the applicable documents below:

- Employment Support Allowance [ESA] award letter dated after 5th April 2025 and all other benefits and/or 3 months' pay slips for all adults earning in the household
- Income Support [IS] award letter dated after the 5th of April 2025 and all other benefits and/or 3 months' payslips for all earning in the household

- Job Seekers [JSA] award letter dated after the 5th of April 2025 and all other benefits and/or 3 months' payslips for all earning in the household
- Pension/Pensions credit [state or private] award letter dated after 5th April 2025
- Tax Return for 2024/25 [self-employed] plus accountants' letter

Payments

Payments are made via BACS into a bank account in the students' name for travel and equipment, or essential books. Payments are not backdated or paid during holiday periods. There are scheduled payment dates for Free College Meals and travel bursary.

For all students, there is an attendance and punctuality criteria (known as Percentage in Learning) of 85% + per week which students must attain to receive a payment for a particular week. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks will be paid a pro-rata amount.

As the College has a defined financial resource to assist students with their bursaries financial support must go to the most deserving of students, therefore, if these objectives are not met each month, the college will withdraw this financial support at the end of the period until students have demonstrated improved Percentage in Learning or provided the requested receipt.

Help with fares

To be considered for financial help with fares, students are to be in receipt of the bursary and hold a current 16+ or 18+ Oyster Card (if living in a London borough).

The financial help will be based on the costs of weekly or monthly travelcards linked to their Oyster Card as per rates shown on the TfL (Transport for London) website. As with the bursary, this help is to promote and support good attendance and punctuality (Percentage in Learning) and will be reviewed monthly for each student applicant by Student Services.

Students must obtain and provide a receipt for the travelcard and hand to the Bursary Administrator (within Student Services) the day after purchase. Stanmore College is situated in Zone 5, therefore, financial support to students living / travelling from the neighbouring Zone 4 will not be offered as the 16+ Oyster card (for students aged 16 – 18 as at 31.8.2025) offers free bus travel which can be used when travelling to college.

Equipment and Educational Trips

During the academic year, students may have the opportunity to attend educational trips associated with their course or are required to purchase equipment to support their course of choice. Trips must be essential to the study programme or course the student is attending. An application can be made to support these costs in writing to the bursary email.

Equipment

The College will pay up to 50% of such costs with the requirement that the student pays the remaining balance. Payments will be 'in kind' where the college are responsible for purchasing the equipment. Following payment, the student will receive a proof of payment in their award letter. An application can be made to support these costs in writing to the bursary email.

Educational Trips

The Discretionary Bursary is provided to ensure that learners of limited means can access learning opportunities. If an organiser believes that the trip may not be financially accessible to all the learners on the course, then they may put in a request for bursary support to the bursary email (bursary@stanmore.ac.uk) (see the Trips and Visits Policy for the details on how to do this).

Outstanding Payments or Fines

Students who have incurred payments or fines (i.e., replacement id badges, overdue book fines, lost books fees etc) are required to make settlement in a timely fashion. If, after repeated requests, payment is not forthcoming, the College can look to recover these amounts from bursary monies owed. Students will be advised via the College app of the deductions to be made in any given period.

Withdrawn Students

Should a student withdraw from their chosen course of study and decide to leave the college, they may be required to repay monies or return equipment supplied / bought by Bursary fund. Eligibility to the College bursary will cease from at the date of withdrawal or non attendance. Any outstanding financial support due will be paid to the student on the next payment date subject to meeting conditions of financial support.

Appeals

If any student is dissatisfied with the decision regarding their bursary application, financial support, help with fares, equipment or educational trips, they need to set this out in writing clearly stating reasons and produce supporting evidence, if needed. The letter should be sent to the complaints department who will investigate and respond to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal letter. The appeal will be heard by two managers not involved in the initial decision-making process.

Amendment to Policy

Name of Policy	Student Financial Support Policy
Policy owner	Director of Student Services
What has been changed	• Template • Dates amended to current academic year • Bursary threshold • Addition of childcare in 16-19 section
Reason for update	• Annual update is required to review the procedures in line with changes according to funding rules and based on the needs of students.
Key changes being proposed	• An increase in the bursary threshold from £30000 to £35000 • Addition of childcare point in 16-19 section due to changes in Care to Learn administration
Has an impact assessment been completed?	
SLT approval date	