

Bursary Guidance and Eligibility 2025-26

This guide explains the eligibility criteria to be able to receive **discretionary/vulnerable bursary and free college meals**.

All bursaries are provided with a view to support you to complete your study programme by helping you to overcome any financial barriers. Therefore, all bursaries are linked to attendance and punctuality of the study programme. You must attend all lessons on time to receive a bursary. The college reserves the right not to make a payment/provide support if your weekly Percentage of Learning (POL – Attendance and Punctuality) drops below **85%**.

For all Discretionary Bursary Funds, due to the limited nature of the fund, meeting the criteria does not guarantee funding. Discretionary Bursaries are income-assessed and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

16-19 Discretionary Bursary

To be eligible for the **16 – 19 Discretionary Bursary** you will be at least 16 and under 19 on 31st August at the start of the academic year, and able to evidence a gross household income of **£35,000 per annum or below**.

Books/Equipment	Up to 50% of the total cost
Educational trips	Up to 50% of the total cost
Free College meals [discretionary]	£3.50 per day on student card or BACS for satellite centres
Travel [if not eligible for Oyster card]	Award based on assessment of need

Free College Meals

To be eligible to receive Free College Meals you must be **aged 16 to 18** on 31st August at the start of the academic year. If you turn 19 during your programme of study, you will continue to be supported until the end of the academic year till you reach the age of 19, **or** to the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner.

Free Meals are targeted at **disadvantaged students**. For the purposes of eligibility for free meals, 'disadvantaged' is defined as students being in receipt of, or having parents/carers who are in receipt of, one of more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of the State 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 assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- Working Tax Credit is paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

**Students aged 19-25 and who have Education, health, and care Plan (EHCP) assessed by the Local Authority and studying in a government funded full time course are eligible for free meals, providing that they meet the household income criteria mentioned above.*

Free College Meals procedures

- Students will be awarded £3.50 [in kind] each day they are timetabled to be in college.
- This is allocated to the college ID badge, which can be used in the college canteen.
- This does not carry over if not used
- For non-main site students [satellite centres] £3.50 will be paid by BACS directly into the student's bank account.

Free College Meal Transitional Protection Arrangements

If you had Free Meals at school or College last academic year, students can continue to receive these pending the below actions:

- If you were not with us last year, you will need to provide us with evidence from your previous provider
- If you were here, you will need to complete a declaration that your circumstances have not changed
- If your financial circumstances have changed, you will need to provide up to date documents

You can check your eligibility for FSM using the following link:

Note: You need your parent's name, NI number and date of birth for this

<https://pps.lgfl.org.uk>

16-19 Vulnerable Bursary

To be eligible for the **16 – 19 Vulnerable Learner Bursary** you will be at least 16 and under 19 on 31st August at the start of the academic year and defined as one of the below vulnerable groups.

You may be able to get a bursary if at least one of the following applies:

- You are in care, or you recently left local authority care
- You (the student) receive Income Support or Universal Credit because you are financially supporting yourself
- you (the student) receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- You (the student) receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit

Vulnerable Bursaries are available for **up to £1200** for course needs and are designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation. Institutions need to be able to demonstrate that the funds will 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.

This payment is paid by BACS into the students bank account.

Childcare

Students who are parents, **aged under 20** on the 31st of August 2025 with childcare needs may apply for additional childcare support through the bursary.

You can get a 'Care to Learn' grant if **all of 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 qualifies
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What you'll get

You can get up to:

- £180 per child per week if you live outside London
- £195 per child per week if you live in London

What it covers

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- your childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare taster session for up to 5 days

- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to your childcare provider

How to apply

Apply for the Care to Learn scheme through Stanmore College. We will inform you if you and your chosen childcare provider are eligible.

When you apply, you must give your education provider either:

- A copy of the child's birth certificate
- A letter confirming receipt of Child Benefit for that child

Eligible evidence required: You will need to provide this on application.

Income Support	A Letter from the Job Centre dated within the last 3 months, along with bank statements showing the Income Support still being received for the LAST 60 Days.
Jobseekers Allowance (Income-based):	A Letter from the Job Centre dated within the last 3 months, along with bank statements showing the Job Seekers Allowance still being received for the LAST 60 Days.
Employment Support Allowance:	A Letter from the Job Centre dated within the last 3 months, along with bank statements showing the Employment and Support Allowance still being received for the LAST 60 Days.
Universal Credit:	Log onto Universal Credit Online and search for the last 3 payments. You MUST also supply the bank statements for the last 90 Days.
Tax Credits:	Tax Credit Notice (TGO2) For the year 2025/26 ALL PAGES NEEDED (4-6 pages normally) Tax Credit Award Notice. This statement must show the benefit being received. (Showing an income of less than £24,000 per annum) You will need to evidence payments into your guardians bank account.
Free School (college) Meals	A letter from the Local Authority confirming that you are eligible for free school meals for 2025/26. Students who were receiving free school meals in the previous academic year are protected until March 2025. You need to provide evidence from the previous institution that you were in receipt of free school meals.
Pension Credit (Guaranteed Element):	Parent(s) in receipt of Pension Credit. Letter from DWP dated within last 3 Months. You MUST also show a bank statement showing payment being received for the last 90 DAYS.
PIP (Personal independent payment)	Personal Independence Payment letter dated 25-26. You MUST also show a bank statement showing payment being received for the last 90 DAYS.
Self-Employment	Last year's Tax calculations, along with bank statements for past 90 days.

Vulnerable Bursary	A letter from the Local Authority, usually from your social worker, stating that you are in care or a care leaver.
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