

2016/2017 FREE COLLEGE MEALS / 16-19 BURSARY FUND APPLICATION AND GUIDANCE NOTES

If you do not understand any of the points, or need help completing your application form, please ask the Business Director.

Free College Meals (FCM)

To be eligible for free college meals students, or their families, must be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits and can provide appropriate evidence:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not working/not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190 as assessed by HMRC
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after stopping qualifying for WTC
- Universal Credit, during the initial roll out of the benefit

OR

- Are eligible for the £1,200 bursary

What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund and who can apply?

The Bursary Fund is provided by the Government to assist eligible students who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education because of financial difficulty. However, it is only able to make contributions towards costs incurred for attending College. It must be stressed that apart from mandatory payments to the most vulnerable students, there is no guarantee of financial support and that any assistance granted may not cover the full costs.

The bursary fund has two elements:

1. A Bursary of £1,200 a year is **only** available to **students** who are:
 - in care, care leavers
 - in receipt of income support (or universal credit)
 - disabled students in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance (ESA) AND Disability Living Allowance (DLA) (**or** universal credit and personal independence payment)
2. A Discretionary Bursary to help with travel to college, essential equipment, books, trips. The bursary can also help with hardship needs arising from a sudden change in circumstances such as redundancy, a sudden drop in household income, family breakdown.

Each application is income assessed and judged on the basis of 'relative financial need'; the amount of bursary will be determined by that need and the funds available.

Students may be assisted if they:

- Are aged 16-18 on 31 August 2016 and enrolled on a full-time or part-time government-funded course of further education.
- Are eligible for free college meals
- Are living in a household with a joint gross annual income of less than £22,000
- Are facing exceptional financial circumstances* even with an annual income over £22,000
- Meet the residency conditions (see page 3)

(*Exceptional financial circumstances: If this applies, a covering letter should be included outlining the circumstances. Supporting evidence may also be required. Applicants will be viewed sympathetically where financial need is evidenced).

When should I apply?

Applications will be accepted throughout the academic year; however priority will be given to those received by **7th October 2016**. Applications received after this date will still be assessed but any support will be dependent on sufficient funds being available.

How will my application be processed?

Fully completed forms with all supporting evidence attached, will normally be assessed within 21 days of receipt but in peak times may be longer. Once your application has been assessed, you will receive a decision letter indicating whether or not your application is successful, what support you will receive and how this will be provided.

How will I receive payment?

Free College Meals - Students eligible for FCM will be able to receive one meal per day, to the value of £2.40. Students will obtain their FCM via their student card and must access their FCM each day, as they are only valid for 1-day. Students who are absent will forfeit their FCM for the duration of that absence.

Wherever possible, discretionary awards will be made via internal transfers within the college to contribute towards the costs of the college bus pass, essential stationery, books, equipment and trips for the subjects studied.

Assistance with UCAS fees and support towards attending HE interviews or university open days (on evidence of booking/attendance) may also be considered.

Where students do not have access to a school bus route, a contribution to their travel expenses will be made (to a maximum of £200). Payment will be made termly (subject to satisfactory attendance) by automatic bank transfer (BACS) so students need to have their own bank account.

Students who are eligible for the £1,200 Bursary will be invited to a meeting to discuss how payments are to be made. This will be a combination of 'in kind' support, for example payment of your bus pass and any essential course items, plus a weekly payment (subject to 100% attendance). The weekly payment will be paid into your bank account during term time only over the academic year.

Payments will be made by BACS so you need to have your own bank account
Any 'in-kind' items remain the property of Cowes Enterprise College and you may be required to return them at the end of your course, or if you leave your course early.

Conditions

Bursary Fund payments will be conditional upon you meeting the college's criteria on:

- Attendance (100%)
- Behaviour
- Progress/attainment on course

Where do I return my form?

Completed application forms and any supporting documentation can be handed in at Reception for the attention of the Business Director. Postal applications should be returned to: Mr Richard Marinelli, Cowes Enterprise College, Crossfield Avenue, Cowes Isle of Wight. PO31 8HB.

What happens if I am not satisfied with the decision?

If you wish to appeal against the outcome of your application you should apply in writing within 10 working days of your decision letter. You should state fully how you feel we have not followed our guidelines or made an error. Your appeal should be addressed to Mr John Peckham, Principal, Cowes Enterprise College, Crossfield Avenue, Cowes Isle of Wight. PO31 8HB.

You will be advised of the result of the appeal, in writing, within 10 working days. This decision is final. Please note Appeals cannot be considered where a refusal has been made due to the Funds being exhausted.

Data Protection

Cowes Enterprise College is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will process information about you solely for the purpose of supporting you through your studies at the Academy.

Residency Conditions

To qualify for the 16-19 Bursary you must meet the following residency criteria set out in the EFA Funding Guidance:

- A person on 1 September who is settled in the UK, and has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the three years preceding the 1 September. If you are in doubt, please speak with the Business Director.