Bury College Policy and Procedures

Student Financial Support Policy 2026-2027

1. Introduction

Bury College receives an allocation of funds from the Government to help support eligible learners with the costs of coming to college. Funding will be distributed to learners in accordance with relevant guidelines and legislation. See Appendix 1 for for details.

Statutory funding includes:

- Free Meals in Further Education
- 16-19 Bursary (inc 19+ continuers and 19-24 with EHCP)
- Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary (formally known as Guaranteed Bursary)
- Care to Learn – Childcare support for students under 20
- 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Funds (19+ DLSF)
- Advanced Learner Loan Bursary

Students may also be eligible to access external funding including:

- FE ITE Bursary for those undertaking PGCE training

Alongside external funding Bury College students may be eligible for support from the following college funds:

- Bury College HE Bursary & Hardship Fund (see Section 6.1 for fund details and eligibility criteria)
- Bury College Student Hardship Fund (see Section 6.2 for fund details and eligibility criteria)

1. Eligibility

Funding is available to learners who are able to demonstrate that they meet the age, residency and eligible education criteria for each fund as stated in the guidelines (see Appendix 1) and live in a household with a low income which as a result will experience financial hardship through participating in education. These funds are intended to mitigate some of the hardships experienced. The exception to this is Care to Learn Funding which does not have any household income eligibility requirements.

The college wishes to minimise bureaucracy and collection or duplication of unnecessary information. However, in order to make sure support funds are used appropriately to those students eligible, the college will carry out further residency checks if a student has successfully enrolled at the college, and the college is drawing down ESFA or SFA funding for this learner.

Any allocation of funding is subject to successful assessment and enrolment onto an eligible course. All funding is subject to available funds and an application / eligibility does not guarantee support either in part or full. On-going funding is subject to full engagement in learning which includes good attendance, progress and positive behaviour.

From September 2026 Free Meals in Education will be available to eligible learners

- aged 16-18
- aged 19 and continuing on the same course they started the previous year
- aged 19-23 with an EHCP funding

who come from a household where they or their parents/guardians claim Universal Credit.

Eligible learners aged 16-18, aged 19 and continuing on the same course they started the previous year or aged 19-23 with an EHCP who are able to demonstrate that their household income is less than £40,000 per annum will be able to apply for 16-19 Bursary Funds to help with the costs of coming to college.

Eligible learners aged 16-18 who are living independently and in receipt of Universal Credit or Income Support in their own name, live in care or are a Care Leaver may apply for the Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary to help with the costs of coming to college.

Eligible learners aged 16-20 with children of their own will be able to apply for Care to Learn funding towards the cost of the childcare they require in order to be able to attend their course.

For eligible learners aged 19+ who are able to demonstrate that their household income is less than £40,000 per annum may apply to either 19+ DLSF or Advanced Learner Loan Bursary funding for help with the costs of coming to college including childcare.

In exceptional circumstances the college may, at their discretions be flexible with the income threshold and an allowance of £1,000 is made for each additional dependant under the age of 18 in the household.

Funding is limited and the college expects all learners to make full use of all other forms of funding available prior to making an application for support.

2. Administration of Applications and Funds

3.1 Administration costs and claims

In line with guidance the college will allocate 5% of the total allocation towards administrative costs from 16-19 Bursary and Free Meals funding and for 19+ Discretionary Learner Support and Advanced Learner Loans Bursary 5% from the total utilised funds.

Funding for the Vulnerable Young Person Bursary will be claimed by the college on an individual student basis via the DfE Sign-In account. There will be no claim for administrative costs.

Funding for Care to Learn will be claimed by the college on an individual student basis via the DfE Sign-In account. The college will also be able to claim 5% on top of the total amount claimed to contribute to administration costs.

3.2 Application and Assessment

Applications for free meals and general bursary funding will be completed online via the Pay My Student Bursary Portal which can be accessed through the direct link from the college website. In cases where this is not possible due to access or language issues, a paper form may be issued and uploaded to the portal by college staff after completion.

Applications for all childcare funds including Care to Learn will be done via paper application which can be collected from Student Services or emailed out to students who wish to apply.

Applications will be assessed in order of date received and funds will be awarded upon receipt of a fully completed form, together with all relevant evidence (see Appendix 2 for details of appropriate evidence). Provided there are sufficient funds available, awards will be backdated to the start of learning (regular payments eg travel costs will be backdated based on overall attendance at the time of processing).

As per the bursary funding guidance notes, students will be contacted via their college email if they are required to provide further evidence or details to support their application. It is the

student's responsibility to check their email regularly if they are awaiting the outcome of an application.

It is the student and parent / guardian responsibility to ensure that they provide the relevant evidence and fully complete the application form. Assistance is available with completing the form on request.

3.3 Notification of Award

On receipt of a complete application along with all the required evidence, the college will normally advise students of the outcome via their college email within 10 working days however for applications received during the first term this may take up to 28 working days due to the high volume of applications received. In the event that a student does not meet the criteria for an award they will be notified in writing or by email stating the reason why.

All awards are subject to satisfactory enrolment on an eligible college course and ongoing commitment to learning.

Students who are unsuccessful in being made an award can appeal using the process in section 3.8

3.4 Method of payment

General Funding awards may be made as payments 'in kind', as Internal Transfers to specific curriculum budgets or by BACS directly to the learner.

For BACS payments the learner must provide evidence that they have a bank account in their own name eg a copy of their bank card, bank statement or letter from the bank showing account name, sort code and account number to match against the details on the application form. Help will be provided with opening a bank account where this is necessary.
In exceptional circumstances where a student cannot manage their own affairs or is not allowed to receive cash payments due to status we will meet with the student to discuss alternative methods.

In the case of payments towards college trips / activities funds will automatically be transferred to the curriculum budget on behalf of the learner unless payment has already been made in full in which case a refund direct to the learner will be made upon receipt of proof of payment.

Students who request support with the costs of stationary including Art packs and Maths sets will be able to collect these from the relevant department subject to bursary approval.

All payments will be evidenced and processed using the Pay My Student Financial Support System.

Payments for childcare will be made directly to the childcare provider based on an agreed funding schedule.

3.5 Non-Payment

Payments will be stopped if a student fails to attend college without exceptional circumstances.

The college accepts no responsibility for any consequences or costs incurred as a result of reduced, delayed or non-payment.

The college will use the following as guidance when making the decision to withhold or reduce payments:

2.6 Attendance Requirements for Regular payments via BACS

All students are expected to demonstrate good attendance, behaviour and progress in order to continue to receive financial support.

Receipt of any weekly payments for travel and meals will be based on achieving **at least 90% overall attendance each week** in **all classes** including compulsory Maths and English classes (GCSE or Functional Skills) and work experience placements.

Attendance less than 90% will result in payments being **adjusted accordingly** based on % weekly attendance. Backdated payments will be based on overall % attendance at time of processing.

Students will receive a list of planned payments and the attendance check date to which each payment relates as part of their award letter.

3.7 Appeal against a reduced payment or non-payment

Students who have had a payment reduced or withheld should in the first instance speak to their Group tutor to discuss their reasons for absence. If the tutor wishes for the student to be paid they should respond to the Pro Monitor notification on the students record relating to this payment.

3.8 Appeals

Appeals must in the first instance be addressed in writing to the Director of Personal Development c/o Student Services, Millennium Centre, Market St, Bury BL9 0DB or via email to financialsupport@burycollege.ac.uk

Appeals will only be upheld where it can be clearly demonstrated either a) the college has not followed its own policy or b) that the student is in a unique situation that the college has not considered previously and additional funding is required to ensure they can complete their course. Where appropriate the Director of Personal Development will meet with the learner to seek further information.

3. Data Protection and Fraud

All applications and associated paperwork will be stored in locked cabinets within the Student Services main office and on the Pay My Student Portal. Only the designated Student Services staff will have access to the paperwork and the application portal. According to guidance, the paperwork will be retained for a maximum of 6 years. The college is required by statute to share certain information with the Government.

The college will always co-operate with criminal investigations and may share information with appropriate authorities that may help with the prevention or detection of a crime.

Any apparently fraudulent applications will be referred to the appropriate authorities and may lead to suspension or exclusion.

4. Funding Awards (see Appendix 2 for evidence required)

5.1 Free Meals in Further Education

Free Meals in Education are available to those aged 16-18 (including 19+ continuers and 19-24 with EHCP) where they or their parents/ guardians are in receipt of Universal Credit or one of the following benefits

- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the Guaranteed Element of Pension Credit

Eligible students will receive a maximum daily allowance of £4.50 per day uploaded to their Student ID badge to be used at college catering outlets - any costs over £4.50 must be funded by the student and any unspent funds will not roll over. The allowance will reset to £4.50 on a daily basis and payments cannot a backdated or reimbursed.

In conjunction with our catering providers the maximum cost of providing a value for money, hot meal and a drink has been agreed at £4.50 per day. This will be provided onsite unless the student is completing a compulsory placement in which case the cost of the meal will be paid retrospectively on production of proof of attendance at placement.

In line with funding guidance £2.66 of the value spent will be taken from the Free Meals in FE funding and any spend over this amount will be funded via 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Funds to a maximum value of £1.84.

In cases where the student meets the criteria for Free Meals in Education but has a household income greater than £40,000 per annum the additional top up funds will be provided from 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Funds to a maximum value of £1.84.

5.2 16-19 Bursary Funds (including 19+ continuers and 19-24 with EHCP) - ESFA Funded Learners only

16-19 Bursary Funds are awarded to support students with the costs of attending college on a day-to-day basis. Applicants must have an annual household income of less than £40,000 per annum.

Support must be identified under one of the relevant support need categories and agreed by the college as necessary to help students participate in education.
Depending on the support need identified payments may be made as a one-off or on a regular basis; directly to the students bank account or in another appropriate format e.g. bus ticket, voucher or direct payment to the curriculum for an activity

For those eligible students the College will provide support under the following categories –

Travel - For those eligible for the Our Pass (Greater Manchester Free Bus Pass) a refund of the £10.00 purchase fee will be issued as a one off payment. For those not eligible for the Our Pass a regular award will be made throughout the college year to cover the actual costs of transport to college eg bus or Metrolink ticket

In exceptional circumstances additional funds for travel may be awarded in addition to the Our Pass for example where travel by train or tram is more appropriate or where travel

outside of GM is required eg for industry placement purposes. Travel payments may be backdated to the date of request subject to attendance and funds being available.

Meals - For those not eligible for Free Meals in College, a maximum allowance of £4.50 per day will be uploaded to the Student ID badge to be used at college catering outlets. This will reset at the start of each day – unspent funds will not roll over.

Compulsory Trips (as confirmed by curriculum teams)– a minimum of 75% of the trip cost will be paid direct to the curriculum (unless the full cost has already been paid in which case a refund will be issued to the student upon receipt of proof of payment).

Course Kit, Uniform and Compulsory Books (as confirmed by curriculum teams) – a minimum of 75% of the costs will be refunded directly to the student

Other College Costs eg stationary, maths sets, additional print credits, internet access, UCAS fees and costs of attending university interviews / open days as required. Proof of costs may again be required to process any refund.

5.3 Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary (formally known as Guaranteed Bursary) up to a maximum of £1200

This is specifically for learners who are considered vulnerable by the Government and fall into one of four categories:

- Child – Looked After (section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or Section 22 of the Children Act 1989)
- Care leaver (section 31 of the Children Act 1989)
- Receiving Universal Credits in own name and living independently or a young parent
- On ESA and receiving DLA or PIP in own name

The college claims this funding on a case by case basis from the Government and it does not form part of a block grant. Assessments will be made by considering the financial needs and other income sources available for the young person and funds will be awarded against the same categories as the Discretionary Funds.

Meal allowance will be paid from either the Free Meals in FE fund or Vulnerable Bursary depending on eligibility.

In cases where the student requires funding over the value of £1200 these costs will be supported from the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund however the student will not be required to provide proof of household income.

5.4 Care to Learn C2L

C2L provides funding for childcare to help young parents (defined as those aged under 20) continue in education after the birth of a child. The scheme provides funding for childcare whilst the young parent is engaged in an FE study programme and is not able to provide care for their child.

The young parent must be the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the Child(ren) for whom they are claiming Care to Learn. If a young parent loses custody of their child(ren), even temporarily, they must notify the college immediately.

The mother or father can claim C2L as long as:
- the other parent is unable to provide childcare, for example, they are also in education or are absent; or the other parent is not claiming childcare paid through any other source, for example, government funded early years places or Childcare Tax Credits.

Young parents must be living and studying in England to receive C2L and must also meet the Residency Criteria in DfE funding rules
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision

C2L will provide help with childcare costs for the duration of the study program and students can claim for independent study time required as part of their program and any compulsory work experience placements.

Funding is awarded at a national rate of £180 per week (London weighted maximum £195 per week) – additional funds may be available from 16-18 Bursary.

Childcare providers must be Ofsted registered and where the provider is related to the child must live apart from the child and be providing registered care for other children who are not related at the same time.

C2L can also contribute to travel for the student, if it is necessary for the student to take their child(ren) between childcare and home. Travel payments are only paid if they are additional to the student's normal travel costs from home to the College. If the childcare is based on the way to or on site of the college then no additional travel can be claimed.

Deposits and Registration fees - C2L will pay a maximum of £250 per child if the childcare provider requires this. Deposits will be paid from the C2L funding. C2L will also pay a registration fees charged by the childcare provider, up to a maximum of £80 per child. These are one-off payments that will not be included as part of the weekly maximum and cannot be paid in future academic years if the student uses the same childcare provider.

Summer retainers - The College can pay summer retainers to childcare providers, if required to hold the childcare place over the summer holiday period. This only applies if the student is finishing study in one year and continuing their study in the next academic year. The young parent must still meet the eligibility criteria for this to be paid.

To be eligible for the summer retainer for summer 2026, the student must:
- have received C2L funding in the academic year 2025 to 2026 and be intending to return to the study programme in the academic year 2026 to 2027;

- be on a study programme that has lasted for 6 weeks or more in the academic year 2025 to 2026;

- be on a study programme that finishes no earlier than 26 May 2026

- be intending to continue with the same childcare provider they used during academic year 2025 to 2026; and

- have been using the childcare provider for a minimum of six weeks

C2L can pay the summer retainer for a maximum of eight weeks, and this cannot be more than the C2L weekly maximum rate.

The college will agree a payment plan with the childcare provider and will pay on a monthly basis upon receipt of an invoice and proof that the child has been attending.

5.5 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Funds

Discretionary Learner Bursary Funds are awarded to support students with the costs of attending college on a day-to-day basis. Students must have an annual household income of less than £40,000 per annum.

Support must be identified under one of the relevant support need categories and agreed by the college as necessary to help students participate in education.

Depending on the support need identified, payments may be made as a one-off or on a regular basis; directly to the students bank account or in another appropriate format e.g. bus ticket, voucher or direct payment to the curriculum for an activity

For those eligible students the College will provide support under the following categories, paid directly to the student over the college year –

Travel expenses – Cost of relevant daily / weekly bus ticket or contribution towards petrol costs based on distance travelled.

Zone 1 those living 0-1 miles from college	no contribution
Zone 2 those living 1-5 miles from college	£2.50 per day
Zone 3 those living 5-10 miles from college	£5.00 per day
Zone 4 those living 10+ miles from college	£7.50 per day

Parking £2.00 per day

Meals – £4.50 per day for each day of timetabled lessons

Compulsory Trips (as confirmed by curriculum teams)– a minimum of 75% of the trip cost will be paid direct to the curriculum (unless the full cost has already been paid in which case a refund will be issued to the student on provision of a receipt)

Course Kit, Uniform, memberships and Compulsory Books (as confirmed by curriculum teams) – a minimum of 75% of the costs will be refunded directly to the student upon proof of payment

Access to Digital Kit – if deemed necessary students can request the loan of a laptop for the duration of their learning programme

Other College costs eg stationary, internet access, clothing, books and miscellaneous trips or expenses as required

Childcare Funding – college will contribute a minimum of 80% towards the cost of childcare required to enable the student to attend their course and the student will be required to fund the remaining costs. Childcare must be with an Ofsted registered provider but can include nursery, childminders and wrap around care.

5.6 Loans Bursary Fund - Level 3, 4, 5 and 6 FE learners with an Advanced Learner Loan aged 19 or over

Loans Bursary Funds are awarded to support students with the costs of attending college on a day-to-day basis. Students must have an annual household income of less than £40,000 per annum and have an approved Learner Loan for their current course.

Funds will be awarded under the same categories as the 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Funds.

5. Bury College Financial Support for Students

6.1 Bury College HE Bursary

Students who progress directly from a full time Level 3 course at Bury College onto a course at the University centre may benefit from a £500 bursary, paid each academic year of your course. The bursary will be paid on the first HE course only and not on subsequent courses.

Student Eligibility Criteria:

- must have commenced an undergraduate course of study in September 2026 at Bury College University Centre and be paying full-time tuition fees via tuition fee loan or self-funded
- must have successfully completed a full Level 3 qualification (e.g. A-levels, Advanced Diploma, or Advanced Apprenticeship, Access to HE or T Level) at Bury College in 2025/2026 academic year

Payments will be made in two instalments (50% in December and 50% in March) of each consecutive academic year of undergraduate study, subject to achieving at least 90% attendance and satisfactory academic progress. Payments will be terminated if the student withdraws, are suspended, transfer to another institution or fail their programme of study

Bury College HE Bursary does not apply to the University of Salford Nursing course – please see https://www.salford.ac.uk/undergraduate/fees for more information regarding fees and finances.

All eligible students will be contacted directly by Student Services at the end of October.

HE Hardship Funds – in exceptional circumstances the college may be able to provide additional financial support to ensure that a student is able to remain on their course. Cases are considered on an individual basis and will take into account attendance, progression and commitment to course and feedback from tutors.

6.2 Bury College Hardship Funds

Bury College will set aside additional funds to help students in emergency hardship where their individual circumstances, or the nature of their financial need means they cannot be supported by one of the previously mentioned funds in Section 5.

Applications for support will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in liaison with Pastoral and Curriculum Staff.

Appendix 1

Further information on the funding sources is available at

16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK

Free meals in further education funded institutions guide: academic year 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK

Care to Learn academic year 2026 to 2027: conditions of grant funding - GOV.UK

Adult skills fund: funding and performance management rules 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK

Advanced learner loans funding and performance management rules: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK

FE ITE bursary funding manual 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK

Appendix 2

Evidence to Support Applications

For **Free Meals in College** - you only need to provide evidence for the relevant benefit dated with the last 3 months. You will also be asked to provide up to date evidence again in **January 2027** in order to ensure funding continues.

For **16-19 Bursary** – you need to provide evidence that your total household income is less than £40,000 per annum.

For **Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary (16-18)** – you need to provide proof of **either** your LAC or Care Leaver Status from the Local Authority, proof that you are in receipt of ESA and DLA/PIP in your own name **or** proof that you are in receipt of Income Support / Universal Credit in your own name because you are living independently or because you are caring for a child.

For **Care to Learn** – you will need to provide either proof that you are in receipt of Child Benefit for the child you have requested funding for or a copy of the Child's Birth Certificate.

For **Adult DLSF and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary** – you will need to provide proof of total household income with an annual income of less than £40,000.

Universal Credit

If you are providing evidence of Universal Credit we will require the statement from your most **3 most recent monthly payments** in order to make an accurate assessment.

Employment Support Allowance, Carers Allowance, Pension Credit and State Pension

We require letters dated within 3 months, of the date you submit your bursary form, that show you are in receipt of the benefit and how much you are receiving per week/fortnight/ month. For ESA it must also show the type eg Income Related or Income Based. If your letter is older than 3 months then you can provide additional proof of payment eg. A recent bank statement to show that you are still in receipt of payment.

Evidence of Employment/Self Employment

This can be submitted in the form of **3 months of payslips** or a P60 if you are employed. If you receive tax credits or Universal Credit and your employment is shown on this document, there is no need to provide further evidence.

If you are self-employed we need to see your **SA302 tax return for April 2026** alongside any other income you receive.

Please note that you may be asked for further evidence of household income, in the form of 3 months bank statements if you only produce payslips/P60 or a tax return in order to verify that there is no other income.

NASS benefits

If you are in receipt of NASS we will need to see your Aspen card or evidence of this support.