

## 16-19 Bursary Policy

Version	1
Author	Group Director of Finance
Directorate / Department	Finance
Date created/updated	June 2026 / June 2026
Approval body	Executive
Date of approval	June 2026
Date of next review	May 2027
EIA date	July 2026
DPIA date	July 2026
Publication	Website, Staff Intranet, Student Intranet

This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. This policy explains the financial support available to students aged 16 to 19 during the 2026–27 academic year. It sets out who can apply, what support is available, and what students need to do to keep receiving help.

1.2. The aim of the bursary fund is to help students overcome financial barriers so they can take part in education, succeed in their studies, and achieve their goals.

1.3. There are four types of support available:

- **Discretionary bursary** – to help with costs like travel, meals, books, equipment, trips, and other course-related expenses.
- **Vulnerable student bursary** – for students in specific circumstances, such as those in care or receiving certain benefits. This is worth up to £1,200 a year depending on need.
- **Residential bursary** – to help with accommodation costs if a student needs to live away from home to attend a course.
- **Care to Learn** – support for students under 20 with childcare and travel costs, now administered by the College

1.4. This policy applies to all eligible students studying at any of the Bedford College Group campuses, including Bedford College, Central Bedfordshire College, Shuttleworth College, The Bedford Sixth Form, The Corby Sixth Form, and the National College for Motorsport.

## 2. Eligibility

2.1. To apply for support from the 16–19 Bursary Fund, students must meet the following general conditions:

- Be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026.
- Be aged 19 or over and continuing a course started when they were under 19 (known as a “19+ continuer”), or
- Be aged 19 to 24 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Meet the residency requirements set out in the government’s funding rules.
- Be enrolled on an eligible course funded by the Department for Education (DFE). This includes most publicly funded qualifications up to and including Level 3.

2.2. Students must provide information and evidence about their household income and/or personal circumstances to enable the College to assess their eligibility and level of need. Details about what evidence is required can be found in Annex A.

2.3. Students taking part in a King’s Trust Team Programme can apply for support in the same way as other students.

2.4. To qualify for the Vulnerable Student Bursary, a student must be in one of the following groups and be able to provide the right evidence:

- In care or a care leaver
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves (or themselves and someone else who depends on them)
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payment) in addition to Employment and Support Allowance (or Universal Credit) in their own right

2.5. Students applying for the Residential Bursary Fund must meet the above criteria and need to live away from home to attend a specialist course not available locally or that requires unsociable hours. The accommodation provider must be approved by the college to offer residential support.

2.6. If you are a parent aged under 20 on the day your course starts, you may be eligible for help with childcare and travel through the government's Care to Learn scheme. From 2026–27, this scheme is managed directly by the College. You must complete a separate application form and provide evidence of your childcare arrangements and timetable.

Funding is awarded based on need and regular attendance, and payments are made directly to approved childcare providers.

Care to Learn is separate from the 16–19 Bursary Fund. You may apply for both if eligible, but they are assessed independently.

2.7. The following students are not eligible for bursary support:

- Those on an apprenticeship or waged training programme
- Those on higher skills (university-level) courses
- Those aged 19 or over on 31 August 2026 who do not have an EHCP and are not continuing a course started before their 19th birthday

2.8. Students can request a reassessment during the academic year if their circumstances change, they join a new course, or they experience unforeseen financial hardship

2.9. In exceptional cases of demonstrable hardship, the College may vary the level or form of support provided to an otherwise eligible student, provided this is consistent with current DfE guidance and the purposes of the relevant funding scheme. The Bursary Appeals Panel may exercise this discretion on a case-by-case basis. Any wider or ongoing changes to eligibility or support arrangements must be agreed by the full Bursary Panel and approved by the Chair.

2.10. Any decisions made under discretionary arrangements must be clearly documented, with the rationale recorded on the student's bursary record. This ensures transparency and allows for internal monitoring and audit. All such decisions will be reviewed periodically by the Bursary Panel to ensure consistency and alignment with policy objectives.

### 3. Assessment Criteria

- 3.1. All bursary applications are assessed based on total gross household income. This ensures that support is targeted to those with the greatest financial need.
- 3.2. Students from households with a total income of up to £42,500 per year may apply for bursary support. Awards are based on assessed need and the availability of funds and are not guaranteed.
- 3.3. New applicants must provide up-to-date evidence of household income. A full list of acceptable documentation is provided in Annex A.
- 3.4. Students applying for Free Meals must provide evidence each academic year to confirm they continue to meet the eligibility criteria in line with current government guidance.
- 3.5. Returning students **not applying for Free Meals** support who received bursary support in the previous academic year do not normally need to resubmit household income evidence unless their circumstances have changed. They will be required to complete a self-declaration confirming their situation remains the same.
- 3.6. All students applying for help with residential costs must provide full household income evidence, regardless of whether they received support previously.
- 3.7. Household income includes earnings from employment, Universal Credit and other means-tested benefits, and self-employment income. Child Benefit, Disability Living Allowance (DLA), and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) are excluded.
- 3.8. For the purposes of bursary assessment, household income normally includes the income of parent(s), partner(s) or other adult(s) who live in the household and contribute to household finances. The College may request evidence of income from all relevant household members.
- 3.9. For households in receipt of Universal Credit, the College will require the last three full monthly award statements. Income is calculated by adding net earnings (take-home pay) and the Universal Credit payment (after deductions) and multiplying the total by four to estimate annual income.
- 3.10. For self-employed individuals, gross profit (total income minus allowable business expenses) is used. Personal living costs such as food or mortgage payments are not considered business expenses.
- 3.11. The College may accept alternative forms of evidence where standard evidence is unavailable or does not accurately reflect a student's circumstances. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and additional information may be requested where appropriate.
- 3.12. Where complete evidence is not available at the time of assessment, the College may make a provisional award based on the information provided.
- 3.13. The College may request further evidence at a later date to confirm eligibility. If the additional information affects eligibility, the College may revise, suspend or withdraw support.

- 3.14. A declaration must be completed and signed by the student (or their parent/guardian) to confirm that the information and evidence provided is complete and accurate. Applications cannot be processed without this.
- 3.15. Where an application is assessed before the start of the student's study programme, the College may request updated evidence or confirmation that household income and circumstances remain unchanged before support is provided.
- 3.16. Continued eligibility for bursary support is conditional on meeting College expectations for attendance and conduct, as outlined in the Code of Conduct and **Annex B**.
- 3.17. The College reserves the right to reduce, withhold, or reclaim bursary payments if attendance or behaviour standards are not met.
- 3.18. Applications submitted by the guaranteed deadline of **14 August 2026** will be given priority. Later applications will only be considered if funding remains available.
- 3.19. Online applications will remain open until the fund is fully allocated or until the published closing date. The College reserves the right to close or extend the application window depending on the availability of funds.

#### **4. Discretionary Bursary Funds**

- 4.1. The discretionary bursary is for students who need financial help to take part in their course. It is awarded based on individual need and household income.
- 4.2. Support may be provided in the following areas:
- Travel to and from college or work placements
  - Course-related costs (such as books, equipment, or uniform)
  - Help with meals during the college day
  - Loan of IT equipment
  - Emergency support during times of financial difficulty
  - Specialist equipment for industry placements
  - Help with exam resit or registration fees (where applicable)
  - Support with internet access or mobile data
  - In-kind support for students without access to a UK bank account
- 4.3. The amount awarded to each student should be based on what they need and how much funding is available. Awards must be based on assessed financial need, actual participation costs and the availability of bursary funding, and should represent good use of public funds.
- 4.4. The College may set indicative budgets for each area of support. These may be reviewed and adjusted during the year to reflect demand and ensure available funding is used effectively.

- 4.5. Transfers between categories (for example, from travel to emergency support) may be made where permitted under government rules. These transfers must be recommended by the Bursary Panel and authorised by the Chair. All transfers should be clearly recorded and must not compromise the overall integrity of the scheme or any funding conditions.

### **Travel Support**

- 4.6. Support through bursary funds with the cost of travel is available to students who travel more than three miles to their site of study or work placement. Distance will be calculated using the shortest safe walking distance from a student's term time accommodation. Exceptional circumstances and Special Educational Needs that do not meet the Local Authority Transport Policy will be considered during assessment and through the appeals procedure where necessary.
- 4.7. Support may include a bus pass, fuel payment, or other travel help depending on what is most suitable and cost-effective.
- 4.8. Travel support is based on where the student studies. Full details are in **Annex C**.
- 4.9. The College may offer different support if it is more suitable or better value.
- 4.10. Travel support is usually only provided during term time.
- 4.11. Students on extended work placements (such as T Levels) can apply for additional travel support if it is not already covered. See Annex D for more information.

### **Essential Course Costs**

- 4.12. The College works with teaching staff to identify what course costs are essential and how much support students may need. This includes costs for items such as equipment, protective clothing, study visits, and other materials directly required to complete the qualification.
- 4.13. Bursary funding can only be used to support learning activities and experiences that contribute to a student's study programme goals or course objectives. Activities must be clearly linked to at least one of the qualifications in the student's study programme and help to remove barriers to participation. Support for overseas trips will only be considered where the trip is an essential part of the student's study programme and the learning outcomes cannot reasonably be achieved through a lower-cost alternative in England.
- 4.14. Details of available support by course or subject area are listed in Annex F.
- 4.15. Support may also be considered for progression-related costs, including UCAS application fees, university interviews, auditions, open days and other activities that support progression to further or higher education, apprenticeships or employment.

## **Loan Equipment**

- 4.15. The College operates a loan scheme for IT devices and other learning equipment.
- 4.16. Students can apply if they need a laptop or other equipment to access online learning or complete their course. Priority is given to those with the lowest household income and greatest need.
- 4.17. All loaned items remain the property of the College and must be returned when the student finishes or leaves their course.
- 4.18. Full details of the scheme and eligibility are in Annex E.

## **Meals**

- 4.19. Students may be entitled to free meals if they, or their parent or carer, receive one of the qualifying benefits listed below. Free meals are provided on the days the student is attending a study programme or placement that is part of their course. This also includes days where the student is attending exams, revision sessions, or planned College events that are linked to their course but not part of their normal timetable.
- 4.20. To qualify, a student must be aged 16–18 on 31 August 2026, or be a 19+ continuer, or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). They must also be in receipt of, or have parents who receive, one of the following:
- Universal Credit
  - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- 4.21. A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, have made a successful application to the institution where they are enrolled.
- 4.22. Households in receipt of Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guarantee element of Pension Credit may also be entitled to a meal.
- 4.23. Free meals are usually provided through the College's catering outlets. If this is not possible, the College will agree an alternative arrangement.
- 4.24. Students receive a daily meal allowance. The current value and payment method are shown in Annex C.

## **Emergency Hardship Support**

- 4.25. The College sets aside a small emergency fund for students facing sudden or severe financial hardship during the academic year.
- 4.26. Students can apply at any time. Awards are made to help with essential costs such as food, transport, or other urgent needs that would otherwise stop a student from attending college.

- 4.27. Emergency meals can be provided even if household income evidence is not available. Students will be asked to confirm the number of days the meals were received and sign a short declaration.
- 4.28. Emergency support is intended to be short-term and will normally be limited to a maximum of four weeks before a full reassessment is required.
- 4.29. These awards are temporary and based on a student's immediate need. The level of support available is shown in **Annex C**.
- 4.30. Priority may be given to students whose circumstances create an immediate risk to their continued participation in education.

### **Additional Participation Support**

- 4.31. The College may consider additional support where a student faces significant barriers to participation arising from disability, neurodiversity, mental health needs, caring responsibilities, estrangement, domestic abuse, digital exclusion or other exceptional circumstances.
- 4.32. Support will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and may include assistance with costs that are not covered elsewhere in this policy where they directly support participation in education and represent an appropriate use of bursary funding.
- 4.33. Examples may include assistance with educational assessments, evidence gathering, examination access arrangement assessments, specialist software, assistive technology, or other participation-related costs where these are not available through another funding source.
- 4.34. Support provided under this section will not normally be used to fund learning support services, counselling, mentoring, medical treatment, private healthcare or other activities that fall outside the intended purpose of the bursary fund.

### **Additional Support**

- 4.35. Students on industry placements (such as T Levels) may also apply for help with specialist equipment or clothing needed for their placement. The amount of support will depend on household income and the actual cost.
- 4.36. Students who are charged for exam resits or registration fees may apply for help with these costs if they are necessary to complete their course and they cannot afford them.
- 4.37. Students who do not have access to broadband at home may be able to receive help with mobile data or a Wi-Fi dongle. This is subject to availability.
- 4.38. Students who are unable to open a UK bank account can still receive in-kind support such as travel passes, meal credits, or loaned equipment. BACS payments will not normally be made in these cases unless approved under exceptional circumstances as outlined in Section 4.31 and 8.5.

4.39. Where a student is unable to open a UK bank account and in-kind support is not appropriate or sufficient, a payment to another person's bank account may be considered in exceptional cases. These must be approved by the Bursary Panel and will follow the rules set out in Section 8.5.

## **5. Vulnerable Learner Bursary**

5.1. Students in certain circumstances may be eligible for a Vulnerable Student Bursary of up to £1,200 per academic year. This funding is to help with the cost of essential course-related expenses, such as travel, meals, and equipment.

5.2. The bursary is only awarded based on need. Students will be asked to provide information about their actual participation costs, and the amount awarded will reflect what they require to take part in learning. The full £1,200 is not awarded automatically.

5.3. To qualify, students must be aged 16 to 18 on 31 August 2026, or be aged 19 or under on 31 August 2026 and continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18, and be in one of the following groups::

- In care or a care leaver
- Receiving Income Support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in addition to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC - all benefits must be received by the student, in their own right

5.4. Students aged 19 or over on 31 August 2026 are not eligible for the Vulnerable Student Bursary but may be considered for support through the Discretionary Bursary Fund where eligible.

5.5. Students must be in receipt of DLA or PIP and ESA or UC to be eligible – receipt of DLA or PIP alone does not meet the criteria.

5.6. Students must provide the appropriate evidence to support their application. The list of accepted documents is included in Annex A.

5.7. Students applying for a Vulnerable Student Bursary must provide evidence of eligibility each academic year in accordance with DFE guidance.

5.8. If a student joins a vulnerable group during the academic year (for example, they move into care or start receiving a qualifying benefit), they may become eligible for a bursary at that point. The level of support will be assessed based on the student's needs and the costs they incur for the remainder of the academic year.

5.9. If a student leaves their course early, any unspent bursary funds will be returned to the College and can be reallocated to support other vulnerable students.

5.10. If a student receiving a vulnerable bursary needs additional help that exceeds the value of £1,200 (for example, because of high travel or residential costs), they may also apply for further support from the Discretionary Bursary Fund. This will be assessed separately based on need.

## 6. Residential

6.1. The Residential Bursary Fund (RBF) helps eligible students with the cost of accommodation so they can attend a specialist course that is not available locally.

6.2. This support is available only for students studying at a campus approved to deliver residential bursaries. At Bedford College Group, this includes Shuttleworth College and the National College for Motorsport.

6.3. Students can apply if they meet the general bursary eligibility criteria (see Section 2) and need to live away from home because:

- The course is not available locally, or
- They need to attend early or late sessions and cannot reasonably travel each day

6.4. Students must also show that they would not be able to continue their education without help towards accommodation costs.

6.5. Priority is usually given to students who live furthest from the campus and have limited or no access to public transport.

6.6. Students receiving a residential bursary may also apply for help with travel. Travel between their accommodation and study or placement site may be funded through the Residential Bursary Fund (RBF), provided it falls within DfE limits. However, travel between the student's home and their term-time accommodation must be supported through the Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) fund and assessed separately. In both cases, students must live more than three miles from their study location, measured using the shortest safe walking route, to be eligible.

6.7. Students receiving residential support may also apply for support with course costs or meals through the Discretionary Bursary Fund.

6.8. If a student qualifies for both a Vulnerable Student Bursary and a Residential Bursary, the College will assess their needs to decide how best to support them. They may receive a combination of both bursaries, but the funding must not duplicate the same costs.

6.9. Support is awarded termly or monthly, depending on the study site. Details of the amounts available are shown in **Annex C**.

6.10. Travel costs paid from the Residential Bursary Fund must stay within DfE limits. This means no more than 15% of the College's residential bursary allocation can be spent on travel support, or a maximum of £25,000 — whichever is lower.

6.11. Students receiving RBF support must provide evidence of income, even if they received bursary support last year.

6.12. If a student leaves their course early or changes to a non-residential course, their bursary may be adjusted or stopped. Any unspent support will be recovered where appropriate and may be reallocated to support other eligible students in accordance with DFE guidance.

## **7. Care to Learn**

7.1. The Care to Learn scheme provides help with childcare and related travel costs for students aged under 20 at the start of their course. It is designed to support young parents to stay in education.

7.2. To be eligible, you must:

- Be aged under 20 on the day your course begins
- Be the main carer of your child
- Be enrolled on a publicly funded course in England at a provider subject to inspection by Ofsted (this includes most courses funded by the DfE)

7.3. If your application is approved, funding can help pay for:

- Childcare costs (up to £180 per child per week)
- Travel between your home, childcare provider, and the College

7.4. Payments will be made directly to your childcare provider, not to you. The College will confirm your attendance before any payment is released.

7.5. If your attendance drops or your course ends, support may be reduced or stopped. It is your responsibility to let the Bursary Team know about any changes to your childcare arrangements.

7.6. The College receives a small administration contribution from the government to help run the scheme. This does not affect the amount of support you can receive.

7.7. Care to Learn is separate from the 16–19 Bursary Fund. If you meet the criteria, you can apply for both types of support, but they are assessed and awarded independently.

7.8. If you need help with your Care to Learn application or want to speak to someone about childcare options, please contact the Student Advice Team.

## **8. Payments**

8.1. Bursary awards are paid using a clear schedule, depending on what the support is for. Some items (like equipment or course costs) may be paid as one-off awards, while others (like travel or meals) may be paid regularly across the academic year.

8.2. Students will receive a bursary award letter showing the amount awarded and how the support will be provided.

- 8.3. Most bursary payments will be made by BACS transfer into the student's own UK bank account. If a student is unable to open a bank account, alternative in-kind support (such as meal credits or travel passes) may be provided instead in line with Clause 4.30. If you are receiving support through the Care to Learn scheme, your childcare provider will be paid directly after your attendance is confirmed. Care to Learn payments are managed separately from the bursary and are not paid to students.
- 8.4. Bursary payments are usually made to the student's own UK bank account. If a student provides bank details that are not in their name, the Bursary Team will contact the student to request updated details. Payments will not be released unless appropriate authorisation is in place. If the student is unable or unwilling to update the details, the case will be reviewed under Clause 8.5. Where necessary, the matter may be referred to the Bursary Appeals Panel or Student Bursary Panel for a final decision.
- 8.5. In exceptional circumstances, payments may be made to another person's account. This will only be allowed in the following cases and must be approved by the College:
- Students receiving a Vulnerable Student Bursary
  - Where there is a safeguarding concern
  - Other exceptional cases considered on a case-by-case basis by the Student Bursary Panel.
- 8.6. Students are strongly encouraged to open their own bank account as early as possible. If students do not yet have a bank account, the College can offer guidance. We may also invite local banks to attend Discovery Days to help students open accounts on site.
- 8.7. Some types of support are not paid directly to students. For example:  
Meal awards are usually loaded onto the student's ID card to use in the College catering outlets  
Equipment and IT devices are issued on loan and must be returned  
Travel support may be provided as a travel pass or monthly allowance
- 8.8. Payments are linked to attendance and behaviour. Students are expected to:
- Attend at least 90% of their timetabled lessons and placements (including exams and scheduled College events)
  - Follow the standards set out in the Student Charter. If attendance or behaviour falls below expectations, bursary payments may be paused or stopped.
- 8.9. Bursary payments may be reduced, suspended or continued during periods of absence, depending on the circumstances and the type of support being provided. Travel support may be suspended or adjusted where a student is not attending their study programme or placement and therefore is not incurring travel costs. The College will consider individual circumstances, including illness, bereavement, caring responsibilities and other exceptional factors, before making a decision. Students should speak to their Tutor or the Student Services Team if they are concerned.
- 8.10. Students may be required to provide evidence of expenditure or participation to support their bursary award and to comply with funding and audit requirements.

- 8.11. Failure to provide requested evidence or confirmations may result in bursary payments being delayed, reduced, suspended or recovered where appropriate.
- 8.12. The payment profiles for travel support and other recurring awards are listed in Annex G.
- 8.13. Students must inform the College immediately if their bank account details change during the academic year. Payments made to an incorrect or closed account because of outdated or incorrect details may not be recoverable. In such cases, the student may be asked to repay the value of the lost bursary where recovery is not possible.
- 8.14. The College may ask students to repay part or all of a bursary if:
- The student withdraws from their course early and the College determines that recovery of unused bursary support is appropriate
  - The student fails to return loaned equipment
  - The student receives funding they were not entitled to
  - A bursary payment was made to an incorrect or closed bank account because the student did not notify the College of updated bank details
- 8.15. Where travel support has been awarded in the form of a bus pass or equivalent, and the student's attendance falls below the minimum expected threshold, the College reserves the right to adjust future travel support. If the value of support provided exceeds the most cost-effective method available, an alternative form of travel support may be offered instead. This will be based on attendance monitoring and the student's ongoing need, and will always comply with DfE guidance. Any changes will take account of individual circumstances and mitigating factors.

## **9. Governance and Discretion**

- 9.1. The Student Bursary Panel is responsible for ensuring bursary decisions align with College policy, DfE guidance, and available funds.
- 9.2. In exceptional cases of extreme hardship, the Chair of the Panel may approve variations (see section 2.9) to the standard level or form of support, provided such decisions comply with funding requirements and are appropriately documented.
- 9.3. The Panel may also recommend procedural changes or temporary flexibilities, where justified, without requiring Executive approval, as long as no core policy principle is compromised

## **10. Other sources of financial support**

- 10.1. In addition to the 16–19 Bursary Fund, there are other types of financial support that may be available to students. These include national schemes, external bursaries, and awards for specific groups or study areas.

### **10.2. Connolly Foundation Bursary**

A non-means-tested bursary for students living in Bedford Borough who are studying certain vocational courses, such as Electrical, Engineering, Construction, Plumbing, and

Health & Social Care. Applications must be made separately, and students must meet the Foundation's eligibility criteria.

### **10.3. Brunel Centre of Bedford Bursary**

Available to students living in Bedford Borough who are studying Engineering at the Brunel Centre. This award is not based on income and supports course-related costs.

### **10.4. Grand Prix Trust Bursary**

A non-means-tested award funded by the Grand Prix Trust, available to students studying at the National College for Motorsport. It supports additional course costs and requires a separate application.

### **10.5. Higher Education Bursaries**

Learners enrolled on Higher Education courses may be eligible for the Higher Skills Progression Bursary, Higher Skills Travel Bursary and the Higher Skills Hardship Bursary.

### **10.6. Additional Targeted Awards**

The College or its partners may offer other bursaries or incentives during the year. These may be based on the course you are taking, your location, or other specific circumstances. Details will be shared directly with eligible students.

### **10.7 How to Get Advice**

If you are unsure what support you might be entitled to, contact the Student Services Team. They can explain your options and help you apply.

## **11. Administration**

11.1. Applications for Vulnerable Learner Bursaries and Emergency Hardship Bursaries are processed centrally by the Student Advice Team, regardless of where a student studies.

11.2. All other bursary applications will be processed by the Finance Team, who also maintain financial oversight of the fund.

11.3. In cases of extreme hardship where a student is facing exceptional circumstances that create a barrier to learning or participation, a member of the Student Advice Team may process the application directly. This is permitted where the request aligns with the bursary policy but needs to be escalated due to the urgency or nature of the student's situation.

11.4. Bursary funds cannot be transferred between scheme types. In particular:

- Residential Bursary Fund (RBF) allocations must not be used for any other purpose
- Discretionary and Vulnerable Learner Bursary funding cannot be transferred into the Residential Fund
- Any unspent RBF funds must be returned to the DfE at year-end

11.5. Any unspent Vulnerable Learner Bursary funding may be transferred to the College's Discretionary Bursary allocation where permitted under current DfE guidance.

## **12. Monitoring**

12.1. The Student Bursary Panel meets fortnightly during August, September, and October to review applications and discuss bursary matters. From November onwards, the panel meets at least once per half term or as needed. The panel's Terms of Reference are set out in Annex H.

12.2. The Financial Accountant and the Accounts Manager are responsible for monitoring the fund. The Finance Team record, track, and review all bursary commitments each month to ensure spending remains within the available allocation.

12.3. An annual bursary funding return is submitted to the DfE in February, with a final year-end reconciliation due in October.

12.4. The College monitors take-up of the bursary fund each year. This includes reviewing how bursary support has contributed to student retention and participation. Findings are included in the College's annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR).

12.5. The Group Head of Careers, Advice and Work Experience collects feedback from students each year to understand how bursary support has helped them. This feedback is used to review the effectiveness of the fund and improve how it is delivered.

12.6. Quarterly performance reviews are conducted to assess how the bursary fund is being managed against key performance indicators (KPIs). These reviews consider fund utilisation, processing times, student satisfaction, and impact measures. Outcomes are reported to senior leaders and inform continuous improvement.

## **13. Appeals**

13.1. If you disagree with a bursary decision, you have the right to appeal.

13.2. Appeals must be made in writing within 10 working days of the decision being communicated. You should explain why you believe the decision was incorrect and include any supporting information or evidence.

13.3. Appeals should be addressed to the Student Bursary Panel and emailed to: [bursaries@bedford.ac.uk](mailto:bursaries@bedford.ac.uk)

13.4. Appeals will be acknowledged within 3 working days by the Student Finance Team. A final decision will be issued in writing within 14 working days.

13.5. Appeal decisions will be made by the Group Head of Careers, Advice and Work Experience and the Financial Accountant. These individuals will not have been involved in the original decision.

13.6. The appeal will consider:

- Whether the decision followed the bursary policy
- Any new or previously unconsidered evidence
- Whether there were exceptional or mitigating circumstances

13.7. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you can submit a formal complaint using the College's Complaints Procedure.

13.8. If you need help submitting an appeal, you can speak to your Tutor or a member of the Student Advice Team.

14.1. The privacy and security of our student's personal information is extremely important to us. Our **Student Privacy Notice** sets out what we do with the information we collect and what we do to keep it secure. It also explains where and how we collect this information, as well as the student's rights over their personal information.

14.2. A full copy of the **Data Privacy Policy** is available on the college website under Downloads: <https://www.bedford.ac.uk/downloads>; please refer to the policy for more information.

14.3. The policy applies to students at The Bedford College Group (registered Bedford College), which includes the brands Bedford College, National College for Motorsport, Shuttleworth College, The Bedford Sixth Form, The Corby Sixth Form, Tresham College and Central Bedfordshire College. It also includes any other brands we add to this group in the future.

## Annex A – Supporting evidence requirements for DFE funded bursaries

### New 16-19, and all Residential bursary applicants only.

We assess total gross household income before any deductions. This includes the income of parents, guardians, carers, or partners (if the student lives with them). Where parents are separated, only the income of the parent the student lives with most of the time will be considered. If care is shared equally or there is significant support from both households, we may ask for evidence from both.

Source of income	Acceptable evidence
Waged income *	Payslips for the last 3 months consecutive months
Income from self-employment ^	Annual tax review (if self-employed) Most recent audited accounts (within past 12 months) Letter from a qualified accountant confirming income
Benefits - IS, JSA, ESA & LASS, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit *	Letter from Job Centre plus/DWP/Local Authority showing means tested benefit
Universal credits *	Universal Credit Award – full award information for the last 3 months
Guaranteed Pension Credit *	Pension credit - guaranteed element
Nil income (both required) *	Self-declaration form (completed via Pay My Student)
	Please provide evidence of income for the rest of the household
Asylum Seeker *	Local Authority Letter/ Letter from Home Office
	Home Office Section 95 support letter
I am in care or am a care leaver *	Local Authority Letter
No UK bank account	Self-declaration form (completed via Pay My Student)
	Letter from bank declining bank account <u>or</u> evidence of a recent application for a UK bank account.

\* All evidence provided must be dated within the last three months

^ Annual tax review must be the most recent document submitted to HMRC or Companies House.

### Examples of non-typical household scenarios.

Scenario	Acceptable Evidence
Student supported by grandparents or extended family	Letter confirming informal care arrangement and relevant income documents from the carer
Parent on maternity/paternity leave	Recent payslip and evidence of statutory maternity/paternity pay from employer
Zero-hour contracts	3 months of payslips or a signed letter from employer confirming average hours and earnings
Foster care	Letter from Local Authority confirming student is in foster care; no income evidence is required
Estranged students (not in care)	Letter from GP, college welfare staff, or recognised support agency confirming estrangement.

## Annex B – DfE funded bursaries terms and conditions

### General

1. Applications are usually available to all students until the specific fund closure dates or when funds are exhausted, whichever is sooner. The bursary panel reserves the right to extend the closing date subject to availability of funds.

### Assessment

2. Financial support is assessed against household income.
  - Students under the age of 19 who live with, or are financially supported by, their parent(s) or guardian(s) will normally be assessed using their own income together with the income of their parent(s) or guardian(s), except in exceptional circumstances.
  - Students aged 19 and over will normally be assessed as independent students. Household income will be based on the student's own income together with that of their spouse, civil partner or partner, where applicable. Where a student has no income and remains financially dependent on another person, the College may assess the income of the person or persons supporting them.
  - For the purposes of bursary assessment, household income may include the income of parent(s), partner(s) or other adult(s) who live in the household and contribute towards household expenses. The College may request evidence of income from all relevant household members.
3. The College uses a household income banding system:
  - Band 1: Income under £16,190
  - Band 2: Income between £16,191 and £42,500
4. Receiving a bursary does not normally affect entitlement to means-tested benefits. However, a student's wider benefit entitlement may affect other benefits received by the student or their family. Students are responsible for notifying the relevant benefit authority of any changes in their circumstances and should seek independent advice if they are unsure how their benefits may be affected.
5. Students applying for support as an independent student or under the Vulnerable Learner Bursary may be required to provide additional evidence to confirm their circumstances. This may include tenancy agreements, utility bills, benefit documentation, evidence of responsibility for a child, or other documentation requested by the College.

### Payments

6. Awards will be made either by BACS or Internal transfer as indicated on your award letter.
7. Awards made by BACS will normally be paid into the student's own bank account and will only be paid into another person's account in exceptional circumstances.

8. If you do not have a bank account, you should take steps to open one as soon as possible. Information about opening a bank account is available from [MoneyHelper](#). Students who are unable to open a UK bank account should contact Student Advice to discuss alternative support arrangements.
9. If you change your bank account details, you must update these on your online account or inform Student Advice as soon as possible. The College cannot accept responsibility for payments made to an incorrect account where updated bank details have not been provided.
10. Internal transfers will be processed to the relevant College department by the Student Finance Team on your behalf.
11. Meal support will normally be provided through your Student ID card and/or the WAY2PAY app for use in College catering outlets on the days you are timetabled to attend College. Daily meal allocations are only available for the relevant day and any unused balance will expire. The College reserves the right to amend the method used to provide meal support during the academic year.
12. Bursary payments are linked to attendance, engagement and conduct. Students are expected to attend at least 90% of their timetabled lessons and meet the standards of behaviour set out in the Student Charter. The College will consider individual circumstances before making decisions regarding bursary payments.
13. The College will consider any mitigating circumstances that affect a student's attendance, engagement or ability to meet the conditions of their bursary award. Advice may be sought from relevant College staff, including Learning Mentors, Programme Managers, Heads of Curriculum, Student Advice and Safeguarding teams.
14. Bursary funding is intended to remove financial barriers to participation in education and is not provided as a regular contribution towards general living costs. Support will only be awarded for eligible costs that help a student access or continue their education.
15. Where an asylum seeker is eligible for bursary support, assistance will normally be provided in-kind rather than through cash payments. This may include course-related books, equipment, meals, travel support or other approved educational costs. The College is not permitted to make cash payments to accompanied asylum-seeking children.
16. Where bursary funding is paid by BACS towards course materials, equipment or books, students may be required to provide evidence that the funds have been used for their intended purpose. This may include receipts or other appropriate evidence. If evidence is not provided when reasonably requested, or if the funds have not been used for their intended purpose, the College may request repayment of some or all of the bursary award.
17. Where bursary funding is paid by BACS towards travel or meal costs, students may be required to provide evidence of expenditure or participation to support their award and comply with funding and audit requirements. This may include travel tickets, fuel receipts, food receipts, attendance records or other appropriate evidence. If bursary funds are not used for their intended purpose, or if evidence is not provided when reasonably requested, the College may request repayment of some or all of the bursary award.

## **Changes in Circumstances**

18. Students must notify the College as soon as possible of any change in household income, living arrangements, course attendance, personal circumstances or any other matter that may affect their eligibility for bursary support.
19. The College reserves the right to review, amend, suspend or withdraw bursary awards where a change in circumstances affects eligibility or the level of support awarded.
20. The College may recover all or part of any overpayment arising from incorrect information, failure to report a change in circumstances, or where a student is subsequently found not to be eligible for support.
21. Where an application is assessed before the start of a student's study programme, the College may request confirmation that household income and circumstances remain materially unchanged before support is provided.
22. If a student withdraws from their course, transfers to another programme, or otherwise ceases to be eligible for bursary support, the College may review their award and request repayment of some or all bursary funding already paid where appropriate.
23. Students may also be required to return any books, equipment, laptops, tools or other resources provided through a bursary award. The College reserves the right to recover the cost of any items that are not returned when requested.

## **Childcare Awards**

24. Government-funded financial support is available for eligible students aged 19 and over studying eligible funded courses.
25. The College will only provide childcare funding during timetabled lessons and on a term-time-only basis for learners supported through the Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund or the 19+ Adult Bursary Fund.
26. Payments will be made directly to the childcare provider in arrears during the first week of each month.
27. All 3 and 4-year-olds (and some 2-year-olds) in England may be eligible for funded childcare through a government scheme. Students are required to use any funded childcare entitlement available to them during their study time at College. The College will only consider funding childcare costs that remain after all available government-funded childcare support has been applied. The College cannot duplicate government-funded support.
28. Where childcare support is funded through the Care to Learn scheme, notice periods will not be funded and support will be administered in accordance with the scheme's separate government funding rules. For learners receiving childcare support through the Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund or the 19+ Adult Bursary Fund, the College will only pay for a maximum notice period of up to four weeks where a student withdraws from the College without informing their childcare provider.
29. Childcare providers are advised to inform the College of any child absence of one week or more where they are receiving childcare funding for that child.

30. The Childcare Bursary will not fund deposits, registration fees or retainers for learners supported through the Advanced Learner Loans Bursary Fund or the 19+ Adult Bursary Fund.
31. A copy of the student's award letter will be sent to the childcare provider. The award letter will confirm the approved funding and will be based on:
- the total number of days per week
  - the number of weeks in the academic year
  - the payment dates

## Annex C – Discretionary Learning Support by primary study location

### Table 1 – Bedford Borough campuses

<b>Primary study location</b> Cauldwell Street Campus, Brooks Hair & Beauty, Bedford Sixth Form (a), Vehicle Technology Centre + Gas & Plumbing Centre			<b>Band 1</b> <b>Less than £16,190</b>	<b>Band 2</b> <b>£16,190 - £42,500</b>
<b>Travel (annually)*</b>	<b>A</b>	Core Travel Zone	Up to £510 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £510 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
	<b>B</b>	Outside of Core Travel Zone (a)	Up to £770 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £770 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
	<b>C</b>	Central Bedfordshire Residents	Up to £350 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £350 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
<b>Course costs (one-off)</b>		Banded by course	See Annex F	See Annex F
<b>Trip Costs (one-off)</b>		Banded by course	See Annex F	See Annex F
<b>Meal bursary (daily)</b>			£5.50 per day	
<b>Print Credits (one-off)</b>			£20	£20

(a) To see if you live in the Stagecoach megarider zone visit their website

[MegaRider tickets for Bedfordshire | Stagecoach \(stagecoachbus.com\)](https://www.stagecoachbus.com/megarider-tickets-for-bedfordshire)

[Bedford Town Zone.pdf](#)

\* Travel awards are based upon a full-time student, awards for part time students will be made on a pro rata basis.

**Table 2 – Shuttleworth Campus**

Primary study location Shuttleworth College			Band 1 Less than £16,190	Band 2 £16,190 - £42,500
Travel (annual)*	A	College bus pass (a)	Up to £825 per annum	Up to £825 per annum
Travel (monthly)*	B	Non-College bus pass	Up to £770 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £770 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
	C	Central Bedfordshire Residents (not using College Bus)	Up to £350 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £350 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
Course costs (one-off)		Banded by course	See Annex F	See Annex F
Trip Costs (one-off)		Banded by course	See Annex F	See Annex F
Meal bursary (daily)			£5.50 per day	
Print Credits (one-off)			£20	£20
Residential support (termly)			Up to £1,313 per term	Up to £875 per term

(a) To see college bus routes and timetable please visit

[Travelling to Shuttleworth | Shuttleworth College | Further & Higher Education \(bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk\)](http://bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk)

\* Travel awards are based upon a full-time student, awards for part time students will be made on a pro rata basis.

**Table 3 – Northamptonshire County Council Campuses**

<b>Primary study location</b>			<b>Band 1</b>	<b>Band 2</b>
Kettering - Windmill Avenue Campus Corby - Oakley Road & Corby Sixth Form Wellingborough - Church Street Silverstone – National College for Motorsport			<b>Less than £16,190</b>	<b>£16,190 - £42,500</b>
<b>Travel (Termly) *</b>	<b>A</b>	Core Travel Zone (b)	Free (a) or Up to £510 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £510 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
	<b>B</b>	Outside of Core Travel Zone (b)	Free (a) or Up to £770 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £770 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
<b>Course costs (one-off)</b>		Banded by course	See Annex F	See Annex F
<b>Trip Costs (one-off)</b>		Banded by course	See Annex F	See Annex F
<b>Meal bursary (daily)</b>			£5.50 per day	
<b>Print Credits (one-off)</b>			£20	£20
<b>Residential support (monthly)</b>			Up to £380 per month	Up to £265 per month

(a) To see if you are eligible for a bus pass funded by West Northamptonshire Council or North Northamptonshire Council, please see their website

West Northants - [Post - 16 travel assistance - Schools and Education \(West Northamptonshire Council\)](#)

North Northants - [Post-16 \(year 12 and above\) travel assistance | North Northamptonshire Council](#)

(b) To see if you live in the Stagecoach megarider zone see their website.

Kettering & Corby

[MegaRider tickets for Kettering | Stagecoach \(stagecoachbus.com\)](#)

[KC MegaRider Map.pdf](#)

Wellingborough

[MegaRider tickets for Wellingborough | Stagecoach \(stagecoachbus.com\)](#)

[Wellingborough MegaRider Map.pdf](#)

\* Travel awards are based upon a full time student, awards for part time students will be made on a pro rata basis

**Table 4 – Central Bedfordshire College Campuses**

<b>Primary study location</b> Kingsway, Dunstable The Incuba, Dunstable Leighton Buzzard Campus			<b>Band 1</b> <b>Less than £16,190</b>	<b>Band 2</b> <b>£16,190 - £42,500</b>
<b>Travel (Termly) *</b>	<b>A</b>	Core Travel Zone (a)	Up to £510 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £510 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
	<b>B</b>	Outside of Core Travel Zone (a)	Up to £770 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £770 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
	<b>C</b>	Central Bedfordshire Residents	Up to £470 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G	Up to £470 per annum payment profile shown in Annex G
<b>Course costs (one-off)</b>		Banded by course	See Annex F	See Annex F
<b>Trip Costs (one-off)</b>		Banded by course	See Annex F	See Annex F
<b>Meal bursary (daily)</b>			£5.50 per day	
<b>Print Credits (one-off)</b>			£20	£20

(a) To see if you live in the Luton and Dunstable zone see their website.

<https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/buy-tickets/region/beds-and-bucks/zone/ats012>

[Student and Child Direct Debit Tickets - Beds and Bucks - Arriva UK Bus](#)

\* Travel awards are based upon a full-time student, awards for part time students will be made on a pro rata basis

## Annex D – Support for Industry placements

### 1. Travel

- 0 - 3 miles - no support (in line with main policy).
- 3 - 6 miles - £4/day whilst on placement
- 6 - 10 miles - £8/day whilst on placement
- 10+ miles – £10/day whilst on placement, or 80% of costs whichever is greater

Support will be paid monthly in advance and split evenly over the months where support is required.

### 2. Specialist equipment

- BAND 1 Household income range £0 - £16,190 = 75% of evidenced costs.
- BAND 2 Household income range £16,190 - £42,500 = 50% of evidenced costs.
- BAND 3 Household income range £42,500 + = 25% of evidenced costs.

#### ***Up to a maximum of £100 per learner***

This award will be paid in a single BACS payment on the next available payment run after the award is approved

### 3. Meals

This will only be awarded if a student is entitled to Meals Bursary. £5.50 per day whilst on placement.

Support will be paid monthly in advance and split evenly over the months where support is required.

## Annex E – Loan IT device Scheme

The College operates a loan IT device scheme for vulnerable children and young people to include those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home.

The Department for Education provide examples of disadvantaged students as:

- with no digital devices in their household
- whose only available device is a smartphone
- with a single device in their household that's being shared with more than one other family member
- who do not have a fixed broadband connection at home

The loan IT device scheme is initially opened to students who,

- ***Studying on a full-time programme***
- ***Have an approved vulnerable bursary for the current academic year.***
- ***Have not been issued with a laptop by their local authority / virtual school.***
- ***Have no device, be predominantly using a smart phone or tablet or are sharing a device with more than 1 member of their household (as per DfE guidelines) to access online resources.***
- ***Are studying for a GCSE or Functional Skills in English or Mathematics, or an eligible course.***

or,

- ***Studying on a full-time programme***
- ***Submitted and application on or before the guarantee discretionary bursary deadline***
- ***Have an approved discretionary bursary for the current academic year.***
- ***Have a household income of less than £16,190.***
- ***Have no device, be predominantly using a smart phone or tablet or are sharing a device with more than 1 member of their household (as per DfE guidelines) to access online resources.***
- ***Are studying for a GCSE or Functional Skills in English or Mathematics, or an eligible course.***

All applications are to be submitted online on bursary portal.

Awards will be made on a first come first served basis until all IT devices are allocated.

IT devices will be available to collect from Student Services by appointment only no earlier than the **w/c 05 October 2026**.

All students will be required to sign a loan agreement before the IT device is issued to them.

Students must return the device when their learning has been completed, or if they leave the course before completion. The device must be returned in the same condition as it was received.

## Annex F – Course costs and trip support

### Course costs

#### Level of support by band

	Band 1	Band 2
A	£0	£0
B	£20	£15
C	£30	£20
D	£50	£35
E	£80	£55
F	£120	£90
G	75% of fee	50% of fee

To find out the support available for your course please click [here](#).

If your course is not listed, please contact [bursaries@bedford.ac.uk](mailto:bursaries@bedford.ac.uk) for advice on the level of support available.

### Trip costs

#### Level of support by band

	Band 1	Band 2
A	£0	£0
B	£20	£15
C	£30	£20
D	£50	£35
E	£80	£55
F	£120	£90
G	75% of fee	50% of fee

To find out the support available for your course please click [here](#).

If your course is not listed, please contact [bursaries@bedford.ac.uk](mailto:bursaries@bedford.ac.uk) for advice on the level of support available.

Students without a UK bank account cannot access the normal bursary payment process. To avoid disadvantaging those students, the College may provide support for 100% of the costs.

## Annex G – Travel payment profiles

Travel support award will be paid on the following profiles

### In Zone awards

Month	Profile	£
September	10%	51
October	5%	26
November	15%	76
December	5%	26
January	15%	76
February	10%	51
March	10%	51
April	10%	51
May	10%	51
June	10%	51
July	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>510</b>

### Out of Zone awards

Month	Profile	£
September	10%	77
October	5%	39
November	15%	115
December	5%	39
January	15%	115
February	10%	77
March	10%	77
April	10%	77
May	10%	77
June	10%	77
July	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>770</b>

### Central Bedfordshire Residents

<b>Month</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>£</b>
September	10%	47
October	5%	47
November	15%	71
December	5%	23
January	15%	71
February	10%	47
March	10%	47
April	10%	23
May	10%	47
June	10%	47
July	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>470</b>

Travel award profiles are based upon a full-time student, awards for part time students will be made on a pro rata basis

## Annex H

### Student Bursary Panel Terms of Reference

#### **Purpose**

To provide strategic oversight and ensure that all bursary awards made by the College are compliant with published policies, allocated budgets, and DFE guidance.

#### **Delegated Responsibilities**

The Student Bursary Panel is authorised to:

- Oversee the fair, transparent, and consistent allocation of bursary funding across the Group.
- Review and approve exceptional or complex cases that fall outside normal policy parameters.
- Monitor overall bursary budget performance to ensure funding is used effectively and remains within DfE guidelines.
- Recommend enhancements to bursary processes, communications, and system functionality to improve access, compliance, and value for money.

#### **Reporting arrangements**

- The Panel shall report quarterly to the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director for Student Experience and Inclusion.
- Updates may also be provided to the College Executive as required, especially where risks, trends, or significant changes in demand are identified.

#### **Meeting Frequency**

- The Panel will meet fortnightly during July, August, and September to manage the high volume of bursary applications.
- From October onwards, the Panel will meet at least once per half term, or more frequently if needed to review in-year changes, appeals, or budget monitoring.

The panel will meet fortnightly during July, August and September and at least once per half term thereafter to review progress and budgets.

#### **Membership**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Full Panel Member</b>	<b>Appeals Subgroup</b>
Group Director of Finance (Chair – designated by CFO)	✓	
Group Director of Student Participation and Development	✓	
Financial Accountant	✓	✓
Group Head of Careers, Advice and Work Experience	✓	✓
Student Advisor Team Leaders	✓	
Group Head of Student Engagement	✓	
Accounts Manager	✓	
Student Bursaries Lead	✓	

Other staff may be invited to attend when required (e.g. a representative from MIS or a local Student Support Advisor).

## **Review**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Group Director of Finance and the Group Director of Student Participation and Development to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

The Bursary Panel may exercise discretion to flex specific eligibility criteria or assessment processes in response to exceptional or unforeseen circumstances. Such decisions must be clearly documented, applied consistently, and remain within the scope of the College's bursary policy and national funding rules