

FE STUDENT FINANCE SUPPORT POLICY For the Academic Year 2016-2017



The purpose of this policy is to explain what funding might be available to help you with the essential costs associated with coming to College. It will explain the eligibility requirements for accessing that funding and the application and award process.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to any learner studying on one of our further education courses who meets the eligibility requirements described in Appendix 1 or 2.

Policy Statement

This funding is designed to support those students most in need of financial support to enable them to engage in education or training. The 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary, Discretionary Bursary and College Meal Support are provided by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The 19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund (dLSF), Advanced Learner Loan Bursary and 19+ Aspire Bursary are provided by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

The EFA and SFA publish national guidance setting out the criteria for all the types of funding that we offer. We will look at any application in line with the national guidance. Where funding permits, we will try to support changes in your personal and/or household finances. Any discretionary award will be made on a first come first served basis and will be subject to the funding that is made available from the Government. **Funding should not be assumed and cannot be guaranteed.**

Where a Student Finance award is given, your attendance at College will be monitored by the Student Finance Team and payment will be made in accordance with a number of attendance criteria, as set out in the Procedure.

Background information

The 16-18 Bursary, dLSF and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary can provide some financial assistance with the costs associated with coming to College. They are government-funded and are designed to assist a priority target group of learners who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

The government's College Meal Support scheme is designed for students aged between 16-18 years old, or students with a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan aged up to 25 years, who meet the national criteria. This scheme provides these students with one meal a day while they are studying.

Roles and responsibilities

- As a student of The College you will be expected to agree to our terms and conditions.
- It is your responsibility to fully complete all parts of the application form to ensure that there is no delay with the assessment process.
- The Student Finance Team will process your application and send you a notification letter within 10 working days of receiving your fully completed application.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you attend College in order to fulfil the attendance requirements of your Student Finance award.

- The Student Finance Team will make the Wellbeing Team aware of all 16-18 Vulnerable Bursaries that have been granted. The Wellbeing Team will monitor and feedback information on vulnerable students' attendance.

Links to College values and other College policies

You should also read our Fee Payment Policy and College Regulations Policy, available on the College website.

Who needs to understand this policy and how will they know about it?

The following training and awareness will be put in place:

Who?	How?
Students	Student Finance Support Policy available on the College website. Reference made to the Policy throughout the application and enrolment process – at College Open Events, during interview, in offer letters, invitation to enrol letters and at enrolment.
College managers	Include in CMT bulletin
All teaching staff	Briefing by Directors of Learning; 'All Staff' e-mail; visits by Student Finance staff to team meetings if requested.
Business Support staff who interact with students	Briefing by line managers; copies of the policy to be distributed.

PROCESS / PROCEDURE

Am I eligible for an award?

The attached flowcharts will explain whether or not you are eligible for financial assistance under these government schemes – see Appendix 1 if you are between 16 and 18 years old and Appendix 2 if you are 19 or over.

How do I apply?

We use one application form for all the finance support schemes mentioned in this Policy. The form has been designed using feedback from students and staff to ensure that it is clear and accessible. You can get a copy of the application form and policy from The Link at our North Road and Lansdowne campuses, or electronically from my**bpc** and the College website. The form is also available in different formats to meet individual student needs.

1. Once you have confirmed from the flowchart that you are eligible for funding, complete an application form and take it to The Link at either North Road or Lansdowne. Make sure that you have fully completed all parts of the form to avoid any unnecessary delays in processing your application. You will also need to supply the required form(s) of evidence with your application – see Appendix 3 for acceptable forms of evidence.
2. All applications will be processed and a notification letter sent within 10 working days of the fully completed form being received.
3. Any discretionary award will be made on a first come first served basis and will be subject to the funding that is made available from the government. **Funding should not be assumed and cannot be guaranteed.**
4. If you are entitled to the Vulnerable Bursary any payment decisions regarding your award will be notified to you by text, using your contact details on our Student Management Information system.

How will I receive the funding?

Payment will only be made directly to you if you are in receipt of the 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary. In this case, payment can only be made directly into your bank account. The WESS Finance team will process the payment and send you confirmation. No other Student Finance scheme will make a payment directly to a student. Instead, we will pay the service supplier direct – for example, the bus company, uniform supplier or nursery. College Meal Support awards will be delivered via the College cafeteria.

Due to Data Protection requirements, if you are aged over 18 you will need to give written consent to the Student Finance Team to discuss matters relating to your award, either verbally or in writing, with a third party.

What are the attendance requirements?

Attendance will be monitored by the Student Finance Team for all Student Finance awards given. Payment will be made in accordance with the following criteria.

- For any 16-18 Bursary awards the central College register system will be used to monitor the monthly attendance thresholds, as follows:
 - 90% attendance or better = 100% of monthly award paid
 - 50-89% attendance = 50% of monthly award paid
 - 49% attendance or below = no payment will be made
- Attendance is monitored for all 19+ dLSF awards **for assistance with childcare** and there is a minimum expectation of 90% attendance each month for payment to be made.

If you are in receipt of a 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary the Wellbeing Team will monitor and feedback information on your attendance. Any changes to be made in your payments will be discretionary depending on individual circumstances.

How do I appeal a Student Finance decision?

If you (or your parent/guardian or carer) wish to make an appeal regarding any aspect of Student Finance, this should be put in writing to the Student Services Manager within 14 working days of receipt of your award letter. A member of the Student Services Team can help you with this if you need assistance. Your appeal will be reviewed by the Student Services Manager and the Equality, Diversity & Community Engagement Manager. You will receive a written response within 5 working days confirming the outcome of your appeal. The appeal decision will be final.

What can I do if I am unhappy with the service I have received?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the service you have received from the Student Finance Team, please record your issues / concerns on the College 'Complaints and Concerns' form which is available from our main reception areas, and hand the completed form to a Receptionist. Your issues / concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the College Complaints Policy and Procedure contained in the Student Handbook on my**bpc**. Copies are also available from main reception areas.

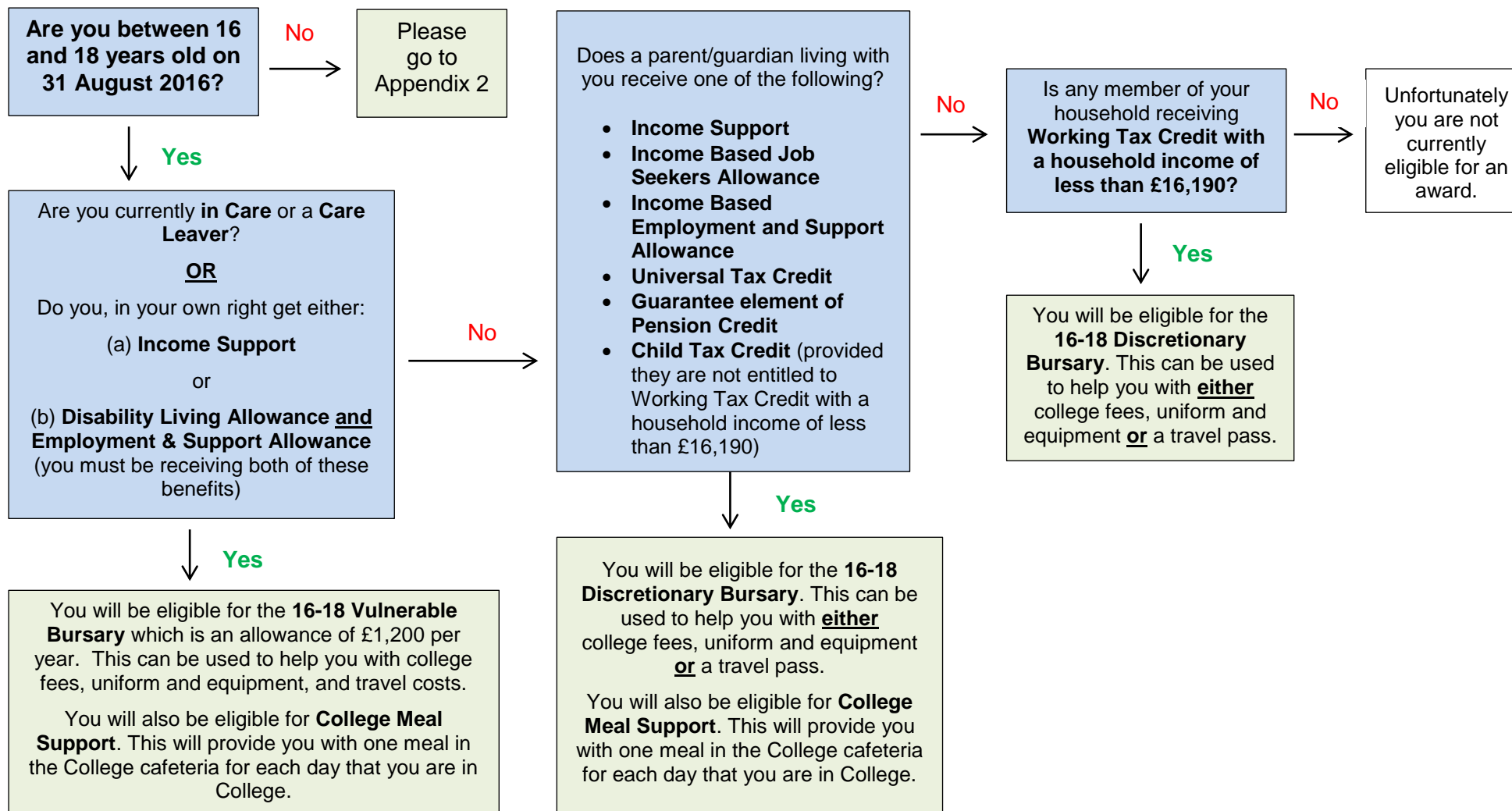
Policy approved by: Senior Leadership Team

Date: 21/07/2016

This Policy is due for review in July 2017.

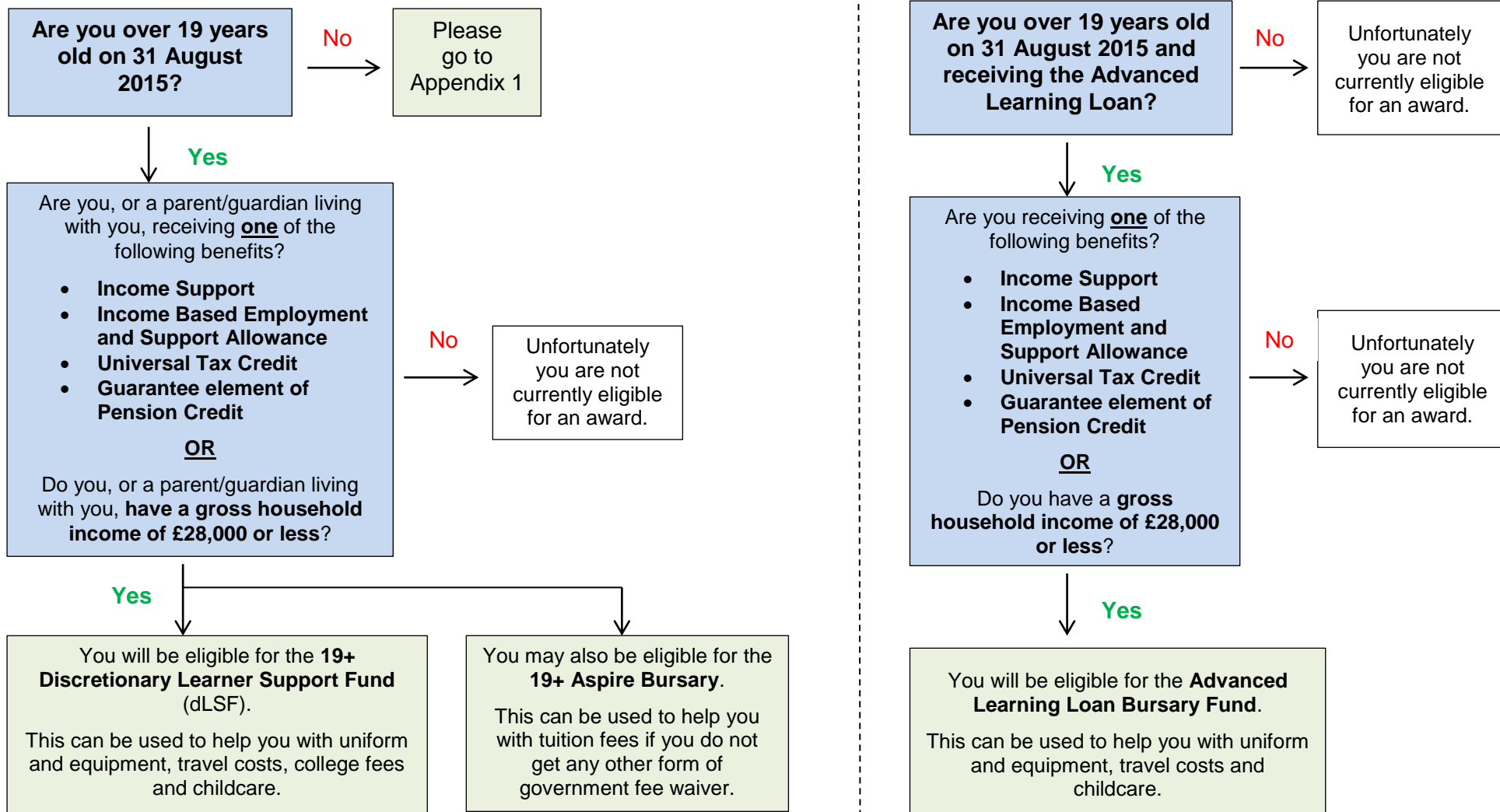


Overview of Finance Schemes available to 16-18 year old FE Students at The College and eligibility information / checklist





Overview of Finance Schemes available to Over 19 year old FE Students at The College and eligibility information / checklist



Acceptable Evidence Chart

Type of Funding	Criteria	Acceptable Evidence
16-18 Vulnerable Bursary	Young Person currently in Care	Email/Letter of Confirmation from Social Care
	Young Person Leaving Care	Email/Letter of Confirmation from Social Care
	Young Person in receipt of Income Support	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 Months of application)
16-18 Discretionary Bursary	Household in receipt of Income Support	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Household in receipt of Income Based Job Seekers Allowance	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Universal Tax Credit	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Household in receipt of Income Based Employment and Support Allowance	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Household in receipt of Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit (Income declared and assessed by HMRC as less than £16 190)	2015/2016 Award Notification Letter
	Household in receipt of the Guarantee Element of the State Pension Credit	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
16-18 College Meal Support	Household in receipt of Income Support	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Household in receipt of Income Based Job Seekers Allowance	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Universal Tax Credit	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Household in receipt of Income Based Employment and Support Allowance	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Household in receipt of Child Tax Credit only (Income declared and assessed by HMRC as less than £16 190)	2015/2016 Award Notification Letter
	Household in receipt of the Guarantee Element of the State Pension Credit	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
19+ Discretionary Learner Support Fund and Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Fund (If student is	Student in receipt of Income Support	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits(dated within 6 months of application)
	Universal Tax Credit	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Student in receipt of Income Based – Employment and Support Allowance	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)

supported by Parent/Guardian household income will be assessed)	Student in receipt of the Guarantee Element of the State Pension Credit	Letter of Confirmation of Benefits (dated within 6 months of application)
	Student Gross Earned Income is less than £28 000	P60's, 3 months' wage slips, and P45 are all examples of evidence that would be acceptable.
19+ Aspire Bursary Evidence of income, as above, will be required	Able to demonstrate that you would be not in receipt of any government funding to reduce fees. There is a maximum award through the Aspire Grant of £800.00	