

**WORCESTER SIXTH FORM
COLLEGE**

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT
FOR STUDENTS
FOR 2023-24**

Updated April 2023

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1. Introduction

The College receives an annual allocation of Discretionary Bursary money from the Funding Body for 16-19 year olds. The College refers to this source of financial support as its Student Support Fund. The fund is subject to both internal and external audit.

2. Aim

The College intends to dispense its Student Support Fund to provide financial assistance to students who otherwise might be inhibited from remaining in education and participating in a College course for financial hardship reasons.

3. Principles for Allocation

To be eligible for financial assistance from the Student Support Fund a student must be:

- (i) enrolled as a student at the College
- (ii) aged 16 – 18 on 31st August prior to the start the course
- (iii) be 'ordinarily resident' in the United Kingdom for the last three years (and not to have come to the UK for the purpose of being a full time student)

4. Process

Students are invited to apply for one or more of the following forms of financial assistance:

- (i) Education Bursary
- (ii) Travel Allowance
- (iii) Free Meal Allowance
- (iv) Additional Student Support Fund
- (v) Discretionary Bursary Fund

The Travel Allowance and Additional Student Support Funds are dependent upon a satisfactory student attendance record.

The Education Bursary is paid weekly.

The Additional Student Support Funds and Discretionary Bursary Funds are allocated to students on an ad hoc basis.

Successful decisions may be subject to the following:

- (i) The Principal, Vice Principal, a Head of Year or Senior Leader for Pastoral Care may make discretionary decisions to allocate funds, to a student, if a need is urgent.
- (ii) Each application is judged on its merits and those students who are most in need of help are identified. The Student Support Funds are limited and consequently it may not be possible for all applications to be successful.
- (iii) Applicants are notified of the outcome of their application, and advised if further action is required, when they submit their application.

5. Guidelines and eligibility criteria

Awards are made to 16-19 year old students on the basis given below:

i. Education Bursary

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, may be eligible for a bursary of up to £1200.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are in care, care leavers, students who receive Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them, such as a child or partner. Also students receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

ii. Travel Allowance

Students whose household income is below £35,000 gross a year and who live more than two miles from College will be awarded a termly Severn Card.

Students whose household income is below £35,000 gross a year travelling to College by train will be awarded the value of a monthly season ticket, followed by monthly season tickets, and then weekly season tickets in order to complete their course of study to the end of each term. Students will supply the Student Finance Officer with proof of purchase for each ticket before funds for the next ticket will be advanced to the student. No further funds will be provided if no proof of purchase is provided for the last ticket.

iii. Free Meal Allowance

Free meals are targeted for students having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- (i) Income Support
- (ii) Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- (iii) Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- (iv) Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- (v) The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- (vi) Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have a gross annual income of no more than £16190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- (vii) Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- (viii) UC with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400pa (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

WORKING TAX CREDIT IS NOT A QUALIFYING BENEFIT FOR FREE MEALS, and a parent or student in receipt of Working Tax Credits is not entitled to a free meal.

A meals allowance of £6.00 will be loaded onto an eligible student's ID card daily to be used in the College cafeteria.

Discretionary Meals

Students who do not meet the criteria for free meals can apply for discretionary meals. Each application will be assessed on a student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

iv. Additional Student Support Fund

Discretionary bursaries funds are to help students with the cost to buy essential books, equipment, specialist clothing, essential trips, course fees and any essential costs of participating in their study program.

Awards from the Additional Student Support Fund are based upon the principle that the families of eligible applicants receive a gross annual income of £35,000 or less and are likely to be in receipt of either:

- Working tax credit
- Child tax credit
- Income support/Universal credit

All awards are based on an assessment of a student's individual circumstances and actual financial need.

v. Discretionary Bursary Fund

At the end of each term, tutors will invite students to apply for discretionary bursary hardship funds, in order to overcome individually identified barriers to participation in a student's course of study.

vi. One-off Annual Fund

A £10 stationery pack may be available to any student who is eligible for Additional Student Support and/or Free Meals at the beginning of the academic year.

A £10 payment may be credited to any student who is eligible for Additional Student Support and/or Free Meals at the beginning of the academic year, to be used for printing from the college printers.

6. Residential Support Scheme

Residential Support Scheme (RSS) Students who have accommodation costs because they live away from home for their studies, may be eligible for help through the Residential Support Scheme. Apply to the College in writing (letter or email jenny.jones@wsfc.ac.uk), addressed to the Student Finance Officer, and we will submit a claim to see if you are eligible.

If you are not eligible for the RSS, you may qualify for a Residential Allowance from the College to help with accommodation costs.

7. Decision Guidelines

In addition, however, the following guidelines will advise those making decisions:

- (i) Applicants/Parents of applicants in receipt of welfare benefits will be required to show proof of benefit payment.
- (ii) Applicants/Parents of applicants must be prepared to show evidence of income and living expenses.
- (iii) Applications from 16-19 students living independently may be considered.
- (iv) Applications for travel assistance from 16-19 students would not normally be considered if they live less than two miles from College.
- (v) Any student in receipt of travel allowance, who leaves College before the completion of their course will be required to return their bus pass to the Student Finance Officer immediately.

Applications for support for trips/visits/exchanges from eligible students will be judged on the following basis:

- (i) An application from a student whose attendance is or falls below 90% may not qualify for full support.
- (ii) The Student Finance Officer will monitor the total value of awards made to individual students from The Additional Student Support Fund and normally restrict the total to £400, the annual allowance.
- (iii) A student who has received an allocation from the Student Support Fund and leaves before the completion of their course may be required to repay all or part of their allocation.
- (iv) Any appeal against a decision made by the Student Finance Officer should be made in writing to the Vice Principal. This decision is final.
- (v) Any complaints relating to Financial Support will be dealt with by the College according to its Complaints Policy, which is available upon request.

8. Monitoring

This policy is monitored annually by the Senior Leadership Team. The funding allocation made to the College, and its disbursement, is subject to annual checks made by the funding bodies, the Trust and the Trust's Auditors.