

Student Financial Support Policy

Purpose

To set up Student Financial Support so all students and staff are aware of the different bursaries within The Inspire Education Group (IEG) and how they can help those students eligible to receive it. Support available is for those extra course costs and not intended for course or tuition fees. IEG adheres to the guidelines set by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) looking to remove any financial barriers students may have whilst in education.

Scope

- This policy applies to those college students eligible to receive financial assistance for the extra costs within education. This does not apply to apprentices
- IEG receives funding from the ESFA. This funding is awarded to support eligible students to help meet the costs of participating in education and training post 16
- The funding the College receives is limited and the College cannot guarantee to support every application received. Students are encouraged to apply as early as possible
- The Discretionary Bursary follows criteria demonstrated within the ESFA guidance. The set criteria for eligibility by IEG are gross household incomes of no more than £16,190pa or no more than £40,000pa, depending on what support has been requested
- None of this funding is guaranteed as it is based on the application being received and the amount of government funding available at that time. Applications are encouraged to be received as early as possible within the new academic year

The Policy Statement

The aim of this policy is to set out the ways that IEG can help to provide financial support to vulnerable and students from low income households

It is the aim of the College to offer a helpful, responsive and friendly service that ensures financial barriers are removed from students so they can achieve.

Policy Name: STU007 - Student Financial Support Policy

Policy Author: Group Manager of Student Recruitment and Admissions

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Responsibilities

- IEG will provide up to date funding information and eligibility criteria for the College Bursary. Changes may occur during the academic year in accordance with any financial changes at the discretion of IEG.
- All IEG students will be given access to an application portal to apply for financial support. Accessible options and support from staff will be made available to those students/parents that may struggle to access the application portal and complete a financial support application.
- Students must provide eligible evidence of household income in each application. Students must complete a bursary application for each academic year of study they attend IEG. IEG will aim to inform students if they are or aren't eligible for the college bursary within 14 days of their application, but this may be longer during busy periods of the year. Application forms for the bursary received without evidence will not be processed until correct evidence is submitted.
- Students will be expected to have 85% attendance for full funding to be awarded, if attendance drops below 85% payments may be withdrawn or withheld and students may be subject to return all awards provided to them .
- Students eligible to receive weekly payments must have their own bank account and provide the account details to the Information Centre. Payments cannot be made into another person's account unless there is a genuine situation where payments could be deemed to be resulting in harm to the individual, such as an open and active safeguarding concern.
- Students that withdraw early from their course or don't meet their agreed course fees payment terms, may be liable to return or reimburse the college of any equipment/kits/payment etc. that have been provided or funding withdrawn

Related Policies

Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
Fees Policy

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RISK ANALYSIS

The risk to the College of not having this policy is that some students could be prevented from furthering their education due to the financial barriers they or their families face and staff may be unaware of the financial support available.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

An Equality Impact Assessment form, Section one, has been completed for this policy.

DATA PROTECTION

See Data Protection Policy

IEG will return (or destroy) all original copies of confidential documents relating to household income but will retain a scanned copy on the student records system for audit requirements and ensuring that each student meets the eligibility criteria.

VULNERABLE BURSARY

The Vulnerable Bursary of £1200 per academic year based on attendance, paid pro rata from the point of application approval and not backdated to the point of enrolment, will be paid to 16-18 year-olds on a learning programme that meets the ESFA eligibility criteria during term time only (not holidays) and who are:

Vulnerable Bursary Criteria
Are you in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit? (evidence required - Income Support or 3 consecutive Universal Credit Statement as well as a tenancy agreement or utility bill in the student's name)
Care Leaver or currently looked after in care (evidence required - letter from Local Authority)
In receipt of both Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit equivalent and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments (evidence required, letters for both ESA and DLA/PIP, or Universal Credit Statement)

Payments of less than £5 per week will not be paid to students due to their attendance being so low.

Weekly payments will reduce in accordance with attendance to lessons on a percentage-based system. For example; student achieves 80% attendance to lessons = student receives 80% of full weekly payment amount.

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DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

The Discretionary Bursary is specifically aimed at students facing financial hardship during their college course. Household incomes must be no more than £40,000pa to receive support or no more than £16190 to receive 100% support with the home to college transport. Free college meals are awarded based on their own set of eligibility criteria. Household income evidence is required to support the application such as up to date details of applicable benefit/s or household income such as:

Discretionary Bursary Criteria			
Full Tax Credit Award Notice 2023	Income Support award letter dated 2023		Job Seekers Allowance Award letter dated after May 2023
Employment Support Allowance / ESA Award letter dated 2023	Guaranteed Pension Credits Award letter dated 2023	Universal Credit 3 consecutive statements dated after April 2023	<p>If your household income between £16190 - £40,000 will have to pay for the college bus pass at £200 per academic year (Peterborough) or £250 per academic year (Stamford) –</p> <p>Income evidence is required</p> <p>If household income exceeds £40,000 the cost of the college bus pass will be £450 per academic year (Peterborough) or £500 per academic year (Stamford).</p>
<p>The amount of financial assistance you receive is dependent on your personal circumstances and what you have applied for. It is intended to help you with the costs of overcoming any financial barriers you may have when attending your course.</p> <p>If students withdraw from your course any equipment and uniform costs may result in you receiving an invoice for these costs and/or the items being returned to the college.</p>			
<p>College Bus Travel Household Income below £16190</p>		<p>Public Service Transport (Stagecoach/Delaine) Household income below £16190 and living more than 2 miles from college where a college bus isn't available</p>	

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<p style="text-align: center;">Free College</p> <p>Meals £5 for each timetabled day during college term time</p> <p>Cost of Living Food Support £7 per week during college term time</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Uniform/equipment</p> <p>100% support for household income below £40,000</p>
<p>Childcare Costs ((19+ students only) further application required))</p> <p>Childcare funding for students aged below 20 years old should be applied for through the government Care to Learn Scheme, See 14.4.</p>	<p>Trips (that are mandatory)</p> <p>100% support for household income below £40,000</p>

TRANSPORT

College Buses

The Discretionary Bursary will support eligible students 100% with the costs of home to college transport where a college bus is available and the household income is no more than £16190.

The Discretionary Bursary will support eligible students £250 with the costs of home to college transport where a college bus is available and the household income is between £16190 - £40,000.

Public service transport

The Discretionary Bursary where the household income is less than £16190 is able to support 100% those eligible students living more than 2 miles from college where a college bus is not available.

Fuel awards can be requested if public transport or college bus services are unavailable or further away than 2 miles from the student's address. The maximum awards given will be equal to the full cost of a college bus pass (which is based on 3 days a week in college). The amount awarded for fuel will be adjusted on a pro rata basis to reflect the amount of days in college in which the student is timetabled. Requests must be submitted in writing and alternatives to fuel payments will be considered before any fuel payments are awarded.

Students who are eligible for 100% support for transport (below £16,190pa) that may require additional transport to attend compulsory work experience as part of their study programme are able to request support from the financial support team 2 weeks in advance of starting their placement - all requests will be considered on an individual basis and the decision of IEG to award (or not) is final.

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Self-funding of transport costs

Students whose household incomes are above £40,000pa will be required to pay for their own home to college transport where a college bus is available at a subsidised cost of £450 (Peterborough) or £500 (Stamford).

FREE COLLEGE MEALS

Free college meals are provided for students aged 16-18 whose household incomes are less than £16190 and in receipt of certain benefits for which the criteria is set out below. 19-24 year-olds are entitled to receive free college meals if they are in receipt of an EHCP and meet the same benefit criteria as 16-18 year-olds as set out below.

Free College Meals Criteria		
Income related Employment Support Allowance (ESA) Award letter dated 2021	Income Support Award letter dated 2023	Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 Award letter dated 2023
	Universal Credit with net earnings of no more than £7400 (£616.67 - per month 3 consecutive statements are required dated 2023	
21/22 Child Tax Credit Award and have an annual income of less than £16190 not working tax credit	Guaranteed Pension Credits Award letter dated 2023 Income based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Award letter 2023	23/24 Working tax credit run on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for working tax credit 19-24 in receipt of an EHCP and one of the criteria above

Procedure for Free College Meals at main campus

Students meeting the free college meals eligibility criteria will have £5 per day, on each of their timetabled college days, be added to their college ID badge which they can use at any of the college catering outlets at any time of the day. Students can choose the items they would like to purchase and scan their ID badge at the till to pay for items up to the value of £5. Any unused daily funds do not roll over to the following day.

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Procedure for Free College Meals off Main Campus

Students meeting the free college meals eligibility criteria as set out in the application form studying off Main Campus, for example, at the Media and Journalism Centre, will be paid £15 per week into their bank account.

Cost of Living Food Support

For students meeting the eligibility criteria for the Cost of Living Food Support; £7 per week will be added to their college ID badge which they can use at any of the college catering outlets at any time of the day. Students can choose the items they would like to purchase and scan their ID badge at the till to pay. Unused weekly funds do not roll over to the following week.

20+ CHILDCARE FUNDING

Students that meet the eligibility criteria for financial support, and are aged over 20 years old, can apply for childcare funding to help with the costs of registered day care or nurseries during their timetabled hours. IEG will pay childcare fees up to £180 per week per child to eligible students that require childcare. If a student is paying for their own course fees and default on payment to the College may result in childcare payments ceasing. Childcare invoices are paid direct to the childcare provider monthly in arrears. Where a student's childcare costs exceed their bursary allocation the student is then liable for any additional fees incurred direct to their childcare provider.

Should a student cease to attend, withdraw or for those who are paying for their course fail to pay their course fees at any point during the academic year, financial support for their childcare will finish with immediate effect. The responsibility for childcare costs will then revert back to the student and their childcare provider from that date. IEG will only make childcare payments during term time within the academic year.

Applications and Process:

Students wishing to receive 20+ childcare funding will need to apply using the standard application form and must also complete a childcare application form which needs to be signed by both the student and the childcare provider. The contract agreement is between the student and the childcare provider. All childcare payments will be based on students meeting a minimum attendance level of 85%, or payments will be stopped. The following evidence will also need to be supplied:

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Discretionary Bursary			
Your household income is required to help us assess your application. If your TOTAL Household income is below £40,000 you may be able to receive support for 20+ childcare, household income evidence will be required as stated below as well as details of your childcare provider.			
Full Tax Credit Award Notice 21/22	Income Support award letter dated 2021		Job Seekers Allowance Award letter dated after May 2021
Employment Support Allowance / ESA Award letter dated 2021	Guaranteed Pension Credits Award letter dated 2021	Universal Credit 3 consecutive statements dated after May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Details of OFSTED registered care provider and fees per session ● Childcare application signed and completed by the childcare provider ● Child/s details including Birth Certificate

Care to Learn

Students aged below the age of 20 with a child of their own will be able to apply for the government funded childcare scheme 'Care to Learn'. Care to Learn funds the childcare costs up to £160 per week per student direct to the childcare provider. Application support will be provided by IEG where required.

Care to Learn Applications and Process:

Students wishing to receive care to Learn funding will need to apply using the government Care to Learn website [Care to Learn: Overview - GOV.UK](#) - Further information around Care to Learn is also available by using the link above.

ADVANCED LEARNER LOAN BURSARY

Students who fund their college course through an Approved Student Finance England Advanced Learner Loan (ALL) and require Additional financial Support may be eligible to receive support towards these costs in addition to their ALL to assist with general study expenses such as childcare or equipment. Their Learning Loan must be at an approved status for tuition funding to be provided and an application for financial support must be submitted in addition. Terms and conditions, including fee waivers are available on the ALL website: [Advanced Learner Loan: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

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APPEALS PROCESS

Appeals must be made within 2 weeks of the decision date. Appeals should be made in writing and should set out the reasons for the appeal. Appeals against the College Bursary should be sent to:

financial.support@stamford.ac.uk: (Stamford)

info@peterborough.ac.uk: (Peterborough)

Appeals will be responded to in writing within 14 working days and any decision made by IEG is final.

MONITORING

IEG will monitor the discretionary bursary student financial records in accordance with auditable and quality procedures. Regular checks will ensure the ESFA allocations are being used correctly and the students are receiving accurate funding towards their education. The college also reserves the right to instruct proceedings to recoup any costs or financial awards given if any attempt to defraud the process is discovered.

All bursary awards are made entirely at the discretion of IEG and can be removed at any time should there be genuine reason. The declaration statement, set out at the beginning of the financial support application form, must be agreed to before any financial support can be awarded.

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Declaration statement:

To meet the current legal funding requirements, the college needs your consent before we can use the information in this form. Any information disclosed is carefully controlled by the college Data Protection Policy, which is available on our website.

Awards from the Bursary Fund are made on a non-repayable basis, however, I understand that I may not receive my full award if I do not meet the required attendance and behaviour criteria.

I understand that I must notify the college of any change of financial circumstances.

I certify that the information given is correct and I understand that the college has the right to reclaim any funds for the costs of transport, uniform or equipment if I am found to have deliberately provided incorrect information or do not complete the course as a result of disciplinary action or non-engagement in curriculum activity.

I confirm that the personal information relating to any person living in my household will be supplied with their full knowledge and permission to disclose it. I agree that Stamford College can process my personal data provided in this form to assess my eligibility for financial assistance.

If this application is being made on behalf of an applicant, by a parent/guardian/family member/social worker for example; you certify that you are in a position to do so or have sought permission from the application to agree to these terms on their behalf; and are responsible for making the applicant aware of the financial support conditions set out in this application.

I understand that Stamford College reserves the right to withdraw financial support due to misbehaviour, fraud or the reputation of the college being brought into disrepute. These decisions are not taken lightly, and are seldom made, but this decision is made entirely at the discretion of the college.

I understand that Stamford College treats fraud seriously and I agree to repay the college in full any monies paid that have been based on false or deliberately misleading information. I understand that in such circumstances all future payments will cease and that Stamford College will take such disciplinary and/or legal action as is deemed appropriate.

For instructions on how to use the application portal, please click [here](#)

I understand that all financial support will cease on completion of the course or at the point of withdrawal; whichever is soonest.

I agree to the declaration above and the conditions set out in the IEG Bursary Policy available on the college websites.

Policy Name: STU007 - Student Financial Support Policy - Declaration Statement - Appendix 2

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