Procedure for the Administration of 16 – 24 Bursaries

SLT Member responsible for policy	Vice Principal – Finance and Resources
Date of policy	June 2026
Date of approval	June 2026
Date of next review	June 2027
Date Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment completed	June 2026

Contents

1. Introduction

This procedure provides guidance on how the College will administer support funds to help young people overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

The funding that may be available to young people is summarised below:

- 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund (also available to young people aged 19+ who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP))
- Bursary for Vulnerable groups
- 19+ Learner Support
- Further Education Free Meals (FEFM)

Student Services administer the funds in accordance with the eligibility criteria.

Supporting Documents

- Bursary Fund Application Form
- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide (Available at www.gov.uk)
- 16 to 18 education: free meals in further education (Available at www.gov.uk)

Important information

Funding is limited and offered on a first come, first serve basis. The College aims to support all eligible learners; however, this may not always be possible. The funding awarded by the College may not cover 100% of the costs.

The College will not award funding to learners who are under 16 years old on 31st August prior to the start of the academic year.

2. 16- 19 Bursary Fund and Bursary for Vulnerable groups

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help learners overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups of up to £1,200 a year.
- Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

All learners are encouraged to apply for support from the Bursary Fund. This is achieved by:

- A bursary form being sent to all learners as part of their new learner/returning learner information pack.
- Inviting parents/carers to attend drop-in sessions during the summer holiday for assistance to complete the application form and/or to check eligibility.
- Application forms being available and visible within Student Services throughout the academic year.
- Progress Coaches encouraging learners to apply.

- Promoting the funds internally, for example on College tours, through parent forums and on the Student Services Noticeboard.

Vulnerable Bursary

Criteria

Learners aged 16 – 18 on 31 August can apply for a bursary payment of up to a maximum of £1,200, if they are on a study programme which lasts for 30 weeks or more in the academic year and meet the residency criteria as described in DfE funding regulations.

To be eligible the learner must meet one of the following criteria:

- To be in care.
- To be a care leaver.
- Receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit, 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 or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

A 'care leaver' is defined as:

> *a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or*
>
> *a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16:*

In some cases, a young person might be eligible for a bursary for 'vulnerable groups' because they meet one or more of the criteria. However, their financial needs may already be met and/or they have no relevant costs, for example a learner in Local Authority care whose educational/transport costs are covered in full by the Local Authority. In such cases, it may be decided that they do not need support from the scheme. Qualifying relevant costs will be identified upon application and if these amount to less than £1,200 the lower amount will be claimed.

Payment

- Payments can be made in either monthly or termly instalments directly to the learner/ parent/carer bank account.
- Payments can be made weekly, monthly or termly and are subject to a minimum attendance of 85%.
- Where possible, the College will make direct payment for transport, meals etc.

Discretionary Bursary

Criteria

Learners are eligible to apply to the 16-19 Bursary Fund dependent upon total household and the learner's needs.

- Priority will be given to learners with a total household income of less than £30,000. This includes income from work, pensions and/or means tested benefits. Applications from all learners will be considered.
- Financial assistance can be requested for:
  - Travel to college e.g. bus pass or contribution to LA assisted transport; the full cost of travel may not be fully met if costs are excessive/disproportionate. Travel costs amounting to more than £50 per week will only be considered if no cheaper alternative is available.

    Mileage costs will only be paid when there is no other appropriate means of transport into college, and this will be limited to 2 journeys per day. The College will contribute up to 50% of the cost at a mileage rate of 45p per mile.
  - Books and equipment.
  - Food.
  - Trips related to the study programme.
- Equipment should be discussed with the relevant curriculum or support department to ascertain needs and requirements.
- Trip requests should be discussed with the relevant curriculum/support department to ascertain the needs and requirements of the trip.

Interns – if eligible for the bursary, interns can receive support with their transport and meal costs whilst at their place of work (as well as at college). Evidence of travel costs are required and receipts for food purchased (which will be reimbursed up to the value of a free college meal).

Evidence of total household income below £30,000

A list of accepted evidence for total annual household income is shown below. Evidence is required for both parents/guardians if they reside at the same address.

- P60 from latest tax year (or most recent three payslips).
- Tax return from latest tax year (if any member of the household is self- employed) – An accountant's letter confirming annual income will be accepted as an alternative.
- Pension statement.
- Award letter for any other benefits e.g. tax credits, universal credit, or any other means tested benefit listed below.

Evidence of means tested benefits should be dated within the six months prior to application. All pages of a letter or award notice in support must be supplied:

- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Employment Support Allowance (WRAG)

- Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)
- State Pension Credit
- Tax Credits award
- Universal Credit (3 most recent monthly award statements)

Payment

- Where the College is contributing to costs (e.g. Local Authority Transport) payments are made on a termly basis. Continuing financial support for Term 2 and Term 3 will be dependent on satisfactory reports (from Progress or Job Coaches) for attendance and effort. Attendance is expected to be over 85% for ongoing financial support to continue , although payments will be made to learners whose attendance falls below this threshold with agreement of the Admissions and Student Services Manager
- Payments will be made to learners/parents/carers via their bank account
- Where possible the College will aim to pay supplier or service providers directly
- Where the above is not possible, receipts should be requested for expenditure
- The Catering department is notified of those learners eligible for meals; the College is invoiced for the cost by the Catering department

Deadline

There is no deadline for when an application can be made; however, allocations of funds are subject to availability. In order to process all bursary applications in a timely manner, the College recommends that applications are submitted in the first week of August.

3. 19+ Learner Support

Criteria

Learners are eligible to apply to the 19+ Learner Support Fund dependent upon total household income and the learner's needs.

- Priority will be given to learners with a total household income of less than £30,000. This includes income from work, pensions and/or means tested benefits. Applications from all learners will be considered.
- Financial assistance can be requested for:
    - Travel to college e.g. (bus pass or contribution to LA assisted transport) full cost of travel may not be fully met if costs are excessive/disproportionate.

      Mileage costs will only be paid when there is no other appropriate means of transport into college, and this will be limited to 2 journeys per day. The College will contribute up to 50% of the cost at a mileage rate of 45p per mile.
    - Books and equipment.
    - Food.
    - Trips related to the study programme.

- Equipment should be discussed with the relevant curriculum or support department to ascertain needs and requirements.
- Trip requests should be discussed with the relevant curriculum/support department to ascertain the needs and requirements of the trip.

Evidence of total household income below £30,000

A list of accepted evidence for total annual household income is shown below. Evidence is required for both parents/guardians if they reside at the same address.

- P60 from latest tax year (or most recent three payslips)
- Tax return from latest tax year (if any member of the household is self- employed) – An accountant's letter confirming annual income will be accepted as an alternative
- Pension statement
- Award letter for any other benefits e.g. tax credits, universal credit, or any other means tested benefit listed below.

Evidence of means tested benefits should be dated within the six months prior to application. All pages of a letter or award notice in support must be supplied:

- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Employment Support Allowance (WRAG)
- Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)
- State Pension Credit
- Tax Credits award
- Universal Credit (3 most recent monthly award statements)

Payment

- Where the College is contributing to costs (e.g. Local Authority Transport) payments are made on a termly basis. Continuing financial support for Term 2 and Term 3 will be dependent on satisfactory reports (from Progress or Job Coaches) for attendance and effort. Attendance is expected to be over 85% for ongoing financial support to continue, although payments will be made to learners whose attendance falls below this threshold with agreement of the Admissions and Student Services Manager.
- Payments will be made to learners/parents/carers via their bank account.
- Where possible the College will aim to pay supplier or service providers directly.
- Where the above is not possible, receipts should be requested for expenditure.
- The Catering department is notified of those learners eligible for meals; the College is invoiced for the cost by the Catering department.

Deadline

There is no deadline for when an application can be made; however, allocations of funds are subject to availability. In order to process all learner support applications in a timely manner, the College recommends that applications are submitted in the first week of August.

Further Education Free Meals (FEFM)

Criteria

Learners are eligible for free meals for each day they attend college if they are:

- Aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August. Learners who turn 19 during their study programme will remain eligible for a free meal until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of their study programme, whichever is sooner.
- Aged 19 - 24 as at 31 August and have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and DfE learners aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August are also entitled to a free meal while attending their provision if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Interns – if eligible, Interns can receive a free meal whilst at their place of work (as well as at College). Receipts for food purchased will be reimbursed directly to the student, up to the value of a free college meal. Or, where an agreement is in place, the employer partner may be reimbursed for meals provided to eligible interns, up to the value of a free college meal.

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged learners. 'Disadvantage' is defined as learners being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa

The following groups of learners are not eligible for a free meal:

- Learners aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme, unless they have an EHC Plan.

Payment

- The Catering department is notified of those learners eligible for free meals; the College then pays for the meals direct.

Financial Support appeals process

Applicants can appeal if they believe that the application has not been assessed correctly or that the level of support is not appropriate.

The appeal should be made in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the award letter.

APPENDIX 1 – Application for Further Education Free Meals (FEFM) & the Discretionary Bursary Fund

APPENDIX 1 - Application for FEFM and Discretionary Bursary Fund

HerewardCollege
PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT

BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS This should be the student's bank account.	
Full name of account holder	
Name of Bank/Building Society	
Account Number	
Sort Code	

DECLARATION

- I can confirm the information I have given on this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and I will inform you immediately of any changes in my/my family's personal circumstances. I understand that if I am found to be giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect/overpayment, this may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered. This might also result in a referral to the police with the possibility of me and/or my family facing prosecution.
- I understand that monies I receive from the Bursary Fund will be paid on condition that my attendance does not fall below 85% (there may be exceptional circumstances); also, that my behaviour meets the required standards expected from all Hereward learners.
- I understand I have the right to appeal if I disagree with the outcome of my Bursary application. This appeal should be made in writing to the college.
- I understand that I do not have an automatic entitlement to Bursary payments, and all payments are based on the information I have provided.
- I understand the College is given a limited amount of bursary fund by the government and cannot offer financial support through bursary once the fund has all been used.
- I understand that if this is a late application for bursary, we will need evidence to support backdating to the start of the academic year.

The student must sign this form if they are 16 or over. If you are signing on behalf of the student, it is because the young person has a severe or profound learning disability which prevents them from understanding what they are agreeing to.

Student Signature:		Date:
Other Signature:		Date:
Circle relationship to student:	Parent / Carer / Guardian	

Have you attached evidence of benefits and/or income to support your claim?
Evidence can be emailed to bursary@hereward.ac.uk

Hereward College is aware of its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, and is committed to processing your data securely and transparently. The information contained on this form will be retained in line with the legislation and used only for the purposes for which it was collected. For further information please contact the Data Protection Officer (dataprotection.officer@hereward.ac.uk) or refer to the Student Privacy Notice.

APPENDIX 1 - Application for FEFM and Discretionary Bursary Fund

HerewardCollege
PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT

Please complete this form to apply for the Further Education Free Meals (FEFM) and/or Bursary Fund.

If you are aged 16-18 and in care, or a care leaver, please contact Student Services for the Vulnerable Bursary form instead.

STUDENT NAME:	**D.O.B:**			
Have you the right of abode and been resident in the UK for the last 3 years? *If you have answered no to this question or are unsure, please contact Student Services for further advice*	**Yes**		**No**	
Are you in receipt of Universal Credit in your own right?	**Yes**		**No**	

FURTHER EDUCATION FREE MEALS (FEFM)				
To be eligible you or your parents must be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits. **Please tick to show which criteria you meet and attach copies as evidence.**				
Universal Credit (3 most recent monthly award statements)	**Yes**		**No**	
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	**Yes**		**No**	
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance	**Yes**		**No**	
The guarantee element of State Pension Credit	**Yes**		**No**	
If you are not in receipt of any of the above, you may be able to get free meals through the Discretionary Bursary fund.				

DISCRETIONARY BURSARY	
Your total household income should be less than £30,000. This includes income from work, pensions and/or means tested benefits. OR you are eligible if the student is in receipt of UC in their own right.	
EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE WE ACCEPT TO DETERMINE HOUSEHOLD INCOME:	
➢ P60 for the previous tax year ➢ Pay slips covering the last three months ➢ Tax return from the previous tax year	➢ Pension statement ➢ Accountant's letter confirming annual income from previous tax year ➢ Universal Credit (3 most recent monthly award statements)
TICK TO TELL US WHAT YOU NEED THE BURSARY FOR:	
TRANSPORT tick one of the options below Local authority taxi or minibus ☐ Bus Pass ☐	On Demand Bus ☐ Contribution to fuel costs ☐

MEALS	**Yes**		**No**	
SPORTS KIT (Sports students only)	**Yes**		**No**	
Any other items essential to your study programme will be provided if eligible for bursary				

APPENDIX 2 – Application for 16-19 (+19) Vulnerable Bursary Fund (16-18 only)

APPENDIX 2 Application for Vulnerable Bursary Fund (Aged 16-18 only)

HerewardCollege
PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT

STUDENT NAME:	**D.O.B:**			
Are you in receipt of Universal Credit in your own right?	**Yes**		**No**	

VULNERABLE BURSARY (AGED 16-18 ONLY)				
To be eligible for the vulnerable bursary you must be aged between **16-18** on 31st August 2026 and-meet one or more of the criteria below. **Please tick to show which criteria you meet.**				
Are you a care leaver or currently looked after in care?	**Yes**		**No**	
Are you in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in your own right? (please provide 3 most recent monthly award statements as evidence)	**Yes**		**No**	

TICK TO TELL US WHAT YOU NEED THE BURSARY FOR:				
TRANSPORT tick one of the options below Local authority taxi or minibus ☐ On Demand Bus ☐ Bus Pass ☐ Contribution to fuel costs ☐				
MEALS	**Yes**		**No**	
SPORTS KIT (Sports students only)	**Yes**		**No**	
Any other items essential to your study programme will be provided if eligible for bursary				

Defining in care *16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2025 to 2026, Published 2 April 2025*
The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' as children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989). Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.
Defining care leavers *16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027, Published 11 May 2026*
The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines a care leaver as either a young person aged:

- 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of at least 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to at least 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16 - they do not need to have entered care after their 14th birthday to be eligible, they can have entered care at any age, but they must have spent at least 13 weeks in care after their 14th birthday before leaving after the age of 16
- 18 or above who was looked after before turning 18 for a period of at least 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to at least 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

Foster care
A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including through independent fostering agencies, is classed as looked after. They meet the criteria for the 'in care' vulnerable group if they have a financial need. In some instances, a young person may have been in the care of the local authority and then left care via achieving permanence through an order such as a Special Guardianship Order. In these circumstances, the young person is defined as having left care so is now a care leaver. They must meet the definition of a 'care leaver' in full.

APPENDIX 2 Application for Vulnerable Bursary Fund (Aged 16-18 only)

HerewardCollege
PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT

BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS This should be the student's bank account.	
Full name of account holder	
Name of Bank/Building Society	
Account Number	
Sort Code	

DECLARATION

- I can confirm the information I have given on this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and I will inform you immediately of any changes in my/my family's personal circumstances. I understand that if I am found to be giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect/overpayment, this may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered. This might also result in a referral to the police with the possibility of me and/or my family facing prosecution.
- I understand that monies I receive from the Bursary Fund will be paid on condition that my attendance does not fall below 85% (except in exceptional circumstances); also, that my behaviour meets the required standards expected from all Hereward learners.
- I understand I have the right to appeal if I disagree with the outcome of my Bursary application. This appeal should be made in writing to the college.
- I understand that I do not have an automatic entitlement to Bursary payments, and all payments are based on the information I have provided.
- I understand the College is given a limited amount of bursary fund by the government and cannot offer financial support through bursary once the fund has all been used.
- I understand that if this is a late application for bursary, we will need evidence to support backdating to the start of the academic year.

The student must sign this form if they are 16 or over. If you are signing on behalf of the student, it is because the young person has a severe or profound learning disability which prevents them from understanding what they are agreeing to.

Student Signature:		Date:			
Other Signature:		Date:			
Circle relationship to student:	Parent / Carer / Guardian				
Please tick to confirm you have attached all the relevant evidence to support your claim eg. copies of Universal Credit statements or benefit entitlement letters.		**Yes**		**No**	

Have you attached evidence of benefits and/or income to support your claim?
Evidence can be emailed to bursary@hereward.ac.uk

Initial Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Name of policy or service	Procedure for the Administration of 16-24 Bursaries
Author of impact assessment (name and job title)	Miranda Coles Vice Principal Finance & Resources
Date impact assessment completed	June 2026
Is this a new or reviewed policy or service?	New policy/service ☐ Date of policy/service Reviewed policy/service ☒ Date of review June 2026

Briefly describe the aims and purpose of the policy	To denote the process taken when administering the Learner Support Funds.	
Who is intended to benefit from this policy and in what way?	All learners within the College	
What could contribute or detract from achieving the aims and purpose of the policy?	None	
What evidence or data has been collected and used to determine the impact on equality groups. Have any data gaps been identified.	Full tracking of learner support fund allocations	
		Comments / Evidence
Has consultation on this policy indicated any possible concerns or issues in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion?	Yes ☐ No ☒	
Is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity by this policy?	Yes ☒ No ☐	Vulnerable learners

Potential impact on grounds of:

Race	Positive ☐ Negative ☐ No impact ☒	
Disability	Positive ☐ Negative ☐ No impact ☒	
Gender	Positive ☐ Negative ☐ No impact ☒	
Gender reassignment/identity	Positive ☐ Negative ☐ No impact ☒	
Age	Positive ☐ Negative ☐ No impact ☒	
Sexual orientation	Positive ☐ Negative ☐ No impact ☒	
Religion or belief	Positive ☐ Negative ☐ No impact ☒	
Marriage and civil partnerships	Positive ☐ Negative ☐ No impact ☒	
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive ☐ Negative ☐ No impact ☒	

If any potential negative impacts of this policy or service have been identified, then a full equality impact assessment form should be completed.