

COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE



BURSARY POLICY AND PROCEDURES 2025-26

Cowley Sixth Form College Student Bursary Policy

Policy Statement

This document sets out the 16-19 Bursary Fund guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the College's eligibility criteria for students attending Cowley Sixth Form College as determined by the College for Discretionary Awards.

A copy of the ESFA's 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2025 -26 can be accessed on the gov.uk website:

[16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

In accordance with the Education Funding Agency 16-19 Bursary Fund Guidelines for 2024-25 – best practice, Cowley Sixth Form College will continue to pay all bursaries 'in kind' rather than cash. For example, providing funding for transport, food, compulsory curriculum trips/visits, provision of stationary boxes each term, curriculum materials and equipment – textbooks, revision guides, clothing allowance, funding for UCAS applications, attendance at university interviews.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. Since September 2022, it has been a requirement that an assessment of a students' actual financial need must be carried out and therefore the bursary awarded must reflect the actual costs the student has to attend college.

Summary of the 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16-19 Bursary Fund has **two** elements:

1. A bursary of up to £1,200 a year (paid in kind) for young people in the following defined **vulnerable** groups:

- a) In care
- b) A care leaver
- c) In receipt of 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
- d) In receipt of both the Employment Support Allowance (or Universal Credit) **and** Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) **in their own right**
- e) Notes: If you claim Employment Support Allowance in order to meet the last of these eligibility criteria, then your family will no longer be able to claim Child Benefit.
- f) If you are claiming Universal Credit, you must confirm which benefit it has replaced. Only Universal Credit that replaces the Employment Support Allowance meets the above eligibility criteria.
- g) Other eligible groups:
 1. Unaccompanied asylum seekers are treated as being in care.
 2. A young person placed with a foster carer by a local authority.
 3. No other groups are eligible.

Please note that students who meet the above criteria will not automatically be awarded £1,200. Students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate in their chosen study programme.

2. **A discretionary bursary** may be awarded to those who need financial help but do not qualify for a vulnerable student bursary. Discretionary Bursary awards are targeted towards those young people who face the greatest financial barriers to participation; such as the costs of transport, meals, books and equipment. The bursary fund is not intended to support non-essential activities or living costs.

Cowley Sixth Form College is free to determine the assessment criteria for eligibility for discretionary bursaries, and the frequency of and conditions for all awards; subject to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Cowley Sixth Form College's criteria are as follows:

- a) Household income:
 - Household Income below £27,500 for one dependant
 - Household Income below £35,200 for two dependants
 - Household Income below £40,700 for three dependants
 - Household Income below £46,200 for four dependants
 - Household Income below £51,700 for five or more dependants
- b) Students who received free school meals at the time of leaving High School
- c) Students whose family is in receipt of Income Support (or Universal Credit)
- d) There are more than three dependents in the household

Cowley Sixth Form College will consider annual household income and distance travelled to college, to cater for the individual needs of the student. This bursary can provide support for transport, college equipment, vouchers or credits for meals, required books and/or equipment and essential college visits.

Bursary Payments

If you qualify for either the Vulnerable Support or Discretionary funding, then this money will be paid in kind in the following ways that are assessed as appropriate to your needs:

1. The purchase of a bus pass for transport to and from college if required
2. The purchase of essential equipment required for subjects
3. Funds added to biometric accounts to purchase breakfast and/or lunch
4. Support with essential trips and visits
5. Costs associated with university/apprenticeship applications

Applications for Cowley Sixth Form College Bursary Awards

Applications must be made online using the electronic application form at the start of a student's first year of study. The initial deadline for applications is **Friday, 12th September 2025**, at which point the system will be closed.

Bursary applications submitted after this date, or applications submitted by this date that do not contain the correct evidence for processing **will not receive any backdated payments**.

Applications can be made at any time throughout the academic year.

For students progressing through to Y13, no further annual check of household income eligibility will be required however, a student must sign and date a self-declaration form to confirm that their household circumstances have not changed.

The College will claim 5% of the Student Bursary Fund allocation per annum to cover the costs of administration.

Students who are deemed eligible should be aware of the following considerations which will be addressed to maintain allocation of bursary/funding throughout the year:

- a) **They must maintain 100% attendance each week to be eligible for payment**
- b) **There must be no unauthorised absences during the school day or persistent lateness.**
- c) **Work submissions must be up to date**
- d) **They must maintain acceptable levels of conduct**

Attendance requirements

- a) Students in receipt of the vulnerable bursary specifically for the purchase of food from the canteen, (who do not achieve 100% attendance for a week), will only receive payment in line with their overall college attendance.
- b) Students will only receive discretionary bursary funding if they have secured 100% attendance for eligible weeks at college. The only exceptions to this rule include the following:
 - i) Medical Procedure or illness supported by a Doctor's Certificate, Hospital letter or letter from parents/carer.
 - ii) Hospital Appointment (hospital documentation is required)
 - iii) University Interview/University Open Day.
 - iv) School Trip Excursion.
 - v) Official School Closure i.e. snow day.

There may be occasions when cases have to be looked at on an individual basis.

An example of these could include any of the following, although this list is not in depth:

- a) Family/close friend's funeral.
- b) Sports trials/training/county selections.
- c) Religious events.

The College reserves the right to defer or cancel awards in the event of unsatisfactory student conduct and in the event of the College being made aware of a change in circumstances which has resulted in a student no longer satisfying these eligibility criteria.

It is important to note that the available fund is extremely limited. The college is under no obligation to make payments or re-imbursments if the application process is not followed correctly. In addition, failure to comply with the terms of the Attendance Policy and/or the Sixth Form Learner agreement will result in further funding not being available.

Supporting Industry Placements

As a college we recognise the fact that some programmes of study will require students to incur additional costs which are above what would normally be expected from full time study. This could include, but not limited to, transport cost to enable a student to access work placement or interview. These students may only need support for a short period of time and may be in addition to students who are already eligible for and in receipt of a bursary payment.

Appeals

Any student wishing to appeal against the Support Level allocated and/or a refusal should do so in writing within 2 weeks of receiving their letter of Support Allocation. Appeals should be made to the Director of Sixth Form or Head of Achievement.