

2022/23 Student Bursary for 16-18 year olds

Who should read these guidelines?

The Young Person who will be attending Stoke on Trent College as a student in September 2022 and Parent(s)/Carer(s)/ or other Adult(s) who are mainly financially responsible for the Young Person.

What is the Student Bursary?

The Student Bursary is money which has been given directly to the College by the Government to help 16-18 year old students who face financial barriers in continuing in full time further education.

Who is eligible to apply for the student bursary?

Applicants must have applied for, been offered or have accepted a place on a full time further education course of at least 12 hours per week. Applicants must be aged over 16, 17 or 18 on 31st August 2022 or aged 19-24 on 31st August 2022 and have an EHC Plan (Education, Health and Care Plan), or in exceptional circumstances under 16 students who are on funded 16 to 19 study programmes.

Young People whose residency status is that of overseas student and who have a UK student visa or a UK visitor's visa will not be eligible to apply for a Student Bursary.

Will the Stoke on Trent College Student Bursary be Income Assessed?

Yes – the Student Bursary will be assessed on the household income of the student's parent(s)/carer(s) or adult(s) mainly financially responsible for the student and with whom they live.

If the student lives with a spouse or partner – the household income of the both will be assessed.

We will look at the student's income only if:
The student lives independently and is supporting themselves.

The student is receiving Universal Credit or Income Support in their own right.

The student is receiving Employment and Support Allowance in their own right as well as Personal Independence Payments or Disability Living Allowance.

Applications from students who live with foster parent(s)/carer(s) within a private foster care arrangement will be assessed on the household income of their foster parent(s)/carer(s).

Applications from Students who are Young Carers and who are registered with a local carer's organisation will not be income assessed.

(A young carer is a young person who looks after a family member because they have an illness or disability, or has a drug/alcohol addiction).

What is the Income threshold?

To be eligible to apply for a Stoke on Trent College Student Bursary household income must be:
£28,000 (before tax) per year or less

What income is taken into account?

All taxable earnings, income and benefits are taken into account. Child Benefit, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independent Payment, Universal Credit and Tax Credit payments are not counted.

What sort of financial help is available to successful applicants?

There are 3 types of bursary depending on your circumstances.

1. Vulnerable Bursary

This fund supports students 16-18 with a financial need relating to costs whilst studying at College who meet at least one of the criteria below:

- Students who receive Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right as well as Personal Independence Payments or Disability Living Allowance.
- Students who receive Universal Credit or Income Support in their own right because they financially support themselves and live independently or financially support themselves and someone living with them such as a child or partner.
- Students, who are in the care of the Local Authority or are care leavers or living with foster parents (but not a private foster care arrangement).

2. Registered Young Carer's Discretionary Bursary

- Students who are Young Carers and who are registered with a local carer's organisation. (A young carer is a young person who looks after a family member because they have an illness or disability, or has a drug/alcohol addiction).

The above Students may receive (subject to assessment of study related financial need not met by another source):

- A bursary of up to £1,200 per academic year (subject to satisfactory attendance).
- A free college meal on days timetabled to be in College.
- Essential equipment and uniform.
- Compulsory Trips (where this has been agreed between your curriculum area and the Director of Student Services)

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3. Discretionary 16-18 bursary

For all other eligible students, help is available towards:

- Travel if you live more than 2 miles from your college campus
- Essential equipment and uniform
- Compulsory Trips (where this has been agreed between your curriculum are and the Director of Student Services).

Free College Meals

The College has a statutory duty to provide a Free College Meal to eligible students on the days they are timetabled to be in College. The College will use the 16-18 Bursary application and administrative processes to identify eligible students and notify them of their entitlement.

Free college meals are available for students who live independently or who are living with parent(s)/carer(s)/adult(s) mainly responsible for them, OR who live with a spouse or partner who are in receipt of any of the means tested benefits listed below:

- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding £7,400 p.a.
- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Based Employment and Support Allowance
- Guarantee Element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit ONLY (and NOT eligible to receive Working Tax Credit) with an income of £16,190 or less
- Support Under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- (N.B. these are the same criteria which would entitle a school pupil to free school meals, and will be the criteria the College uses to identify statutory eligibility for Free College Meals).

Important notice regarding availability of funding

The total amount of funding the College will receive from the Government is finite. Application and eligibility is not a guarantee that award will be made.

The College will aim to help as many eligible students as possible and is recommending that all students who have identified that they are eligible to apply should do so as soon as possible.

However, should there be a shortfall in funding and if the College is unable to make awards to all eligible applicants, the College will prioritise eligible students on a case by case basis according to individual's needs and circumstances.

When can I apply to the Bursary Fund?

We would encourage all prospective and returning students who think that they might be eligible to apply for assistance to complete and submit the Student Bursary application form during the summer vacation period in order that their application can be assessed before the start of term. Early application will help us ensure that any assistance awarded can be put in place as close as possible to the start of the September term.

Applications can be made throughout the year. Application forms and guidance notes will be available to print off from the College website or by emailing studentassistance@stokecoll.ac.uk to request that one is posted out to you.

Do I need to submit evidence with the application form?

Yes, it is very important that the correct evidence is submitted with the application. The evidence is required for each type of earnings, income and benefit is clearly specified on the application form. Photocopies are preferred but financial assistance staff will photocopy and return evidence if required.

If the correct evidence is not submitted the form cannot be assessed and an award **cannot** be made. If this is the case, we will write to or email the student to inform them of what further evidence they need to submit. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that they do this promptly.

How will students know if they have been successful?

We will write to or email all students informing them of the outcome of their application. Successful students will get **an award notice** which tells them what their award is including where applicable if they are entitled to free college meals. This means that wherever possible most eligible students will know what level of assistance they can expect when they start their course.

Students who make later applications to the fund will receive an award notice as soon as an assessment has been made.

We will also communicate to all unsuccessful students informing them of the reasons for the College's decision.

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How and when will payment be made?

Payments will only be issued once the student is enrolled on and has been attending their course for at least two weeks.

The Vulnerable Bursary and the Registered Young Carer's Discretionary Bursary will be paid by weekly BACS credit transfer into their bank account.

Essential equipment and uniform will usually be purchased or costs met by the College on behalf of the student, the Bursary Fund will reimburse the College.

If you are required to purchase essential uniform and equipment, these would be reimbursed by BACS credit transfer.

Please note that no guarantee can be given that the full cost of an item will be reimbursed.

For Students living in North Staffordshire, travel support will take the form of a Smart multi-operator bus pass, which allows you to travel on buses provided by different operators across North Staffordshire with just one ticket – facilitated by weekly, monthly and three-monthly passes issued by the Student Financial Assistance team.

If you live outside of the North Staffordshire area, we would look to provide travel support in the form of a First bus pass. If you have to use alternative transport methods you may be eligible for Discretionary Bursary travel payments, which will be made by monthly BACS credit transfer into the student's bank account.

Students eligible for Free College Meals studying at the Cauldon and Burslem Campuses will be given credit on their student ID card, which can be used in the Campus Restaurants.

Bank Details

As outlined above, some payments will be made by BACS credit transfer directly to a bank account and as part of our application form we have included a request for bank details and would ask that all students fill in this section with their bank details.

Please note payments can only be made into the student's own bank account.

Are there any other conditions for receiving assistance from the Bursary Fund?

Yes, any payments will be conditional on good attendance, good behaviour and satisfactory academic progress (for example completing and handing in work set on time). These conditions are the same as those outlined in your Learner Agreement which you will sign when you enrol at Stoke on Trent College.

What should I do if I am not happy with any decision that has been made regarding my application?

Students can appeal against any decision made regarding their application using a 16-18 Student Bursary Appeal form or in writing to the Director of Student Services.

Initial assessments of applications and initial award decisions are made by the team leader for the Student Financial Assistance team. In order to ensure impartiality, appeals will be investigated by the Director of Student Services who has no part in the original decision making.

Changes in Circumstances

Students may submit further evidence should a change occur in their circumstances which may result in them being assessed for a higher level of assistance. Except for Vulnerable Bursary students and where eligibility for Free College Meals has been identified, all other further awards will be subject to availability of funding. Students are also required to disclose any change in circumstances – personal, financial or educational that may make them ineligible for funding. Failure to do so may make the students liable for the cost of funding already received.

Equality and Diversity Statement:

The Director of Student Services and the Student Financial Assistance Team will:

1. Take positive action to ensure that all students can apply for financial support thus widening participation and providing learning opportunities for underrepresented groups.
2. Ensure that no applicant to the Bursary Fund receives less favourable treatment which cannot be justified in relation to individual financial/personal circumstances.
3. Ensure that all Student Support Bursary Fund literature, marketing and publicity materials are free from stereotypes, discriminatory assumptions, images and language.
4. Monitor and review the effectiveness of the support on a regular basis.
5. Ensure that this form is available in other formats if required.

Confidentiality

Applications and evidence of income are only seen by staff involved in the delivery of the Student Bursary Scheme. All ticked sections on the form are treated in confidence.

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GDPR

Stoke on Trent College is a data controller committed to ensuring the security and protection of the personal information that we process under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The Student Financial Assistance Team collect data requested on the bursary application form and use it to assess your eligibility to access learner support funds. Data is inputted onto our electronic systems to allow us to make payments. Application forms and associated evidence is stored securely on campus: for learners studying off site this data will be stored at one of our main sites (Cauldon Campus, Shelton or Burslem Campus).

Your data may be shared with relevant government departments or their agencies for the purpose of quality assurance and compliance.

For those learners accessing Free College Meals we must inform our external catering service to allow you to access this entitlement.

Our Data Protection Policy is available on our website if you require further information.