

Student Financial Support Policy

The College receives Government criteria and funding to enable students who are aged 16-19 years to continue in full-time education, who might otherwise be financially disadvantaged. The support is provided by a variety of schemes which can be divided into the following types:

(a) Student Support: Discretionary Bursary and Contribution to Food Costs. Linked to levels of household income.

Student aged over 16 but under 19 on 31st August 2025, living with parents/ carers or who live independently can apply for the Discretionary Bursary. Eligibility is based on household income and the receipt of qualifying state benefits listed below.

- 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) Universal Credit

In addition to being in receipt of one of the above benefits, total household income (i.e. take home pay from employment or self-employment plus benefits received) must not exceed £30,000

Free College Meals – if you are receipt of Universal Credit and your earnings from employment or self-employment are below £7,400 per year then you qualify for Free College Meals, if you meet these criteria please complete the Financial Assessment Form, even if you do not meet the criteria for the bursary.

Additionally, if you have received Free School Meals in the last 6 years you are still eligible to receive free meals even if you no longer meet the criteria. If this is the case please complete the Financial Assessment form and indicate by ticking the relevant box on the form.

Please be aware that it is the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence of household income and participation in these schemes cannot be considered without the relevant documentation.

This is a government funded bursary and in line with their instructions, we can not award flat rate payments. All payments must be linked to specific educational need.

- Transport (Bus/ Train Season Ticket)
- Food Allowance (to be used in on-site refectories)
- Essential equipment for relevant subjects i.e. calculators, books, art packs, revision guides etc.
- Curriculum related day trips

- Exam re-sit fees
- Stationery supplies
- Progression fees including UCAS fees (where appropriate)

Note: If the bursary application is approved then the College Learning Resource Contribution will be waived.

How to Apply:

Students who have applied to begin their first year of study at College should complete and submit the online application form - [The Sixth Form College Colchester - Finance \(colchsfc.ac.uk\)](https://colchsfc.ac.uk). Applications, along with supporting evidence, should be submitted by **4th August 2025**. Although you may not be certain by this point that the student will be enrolling with the College in late August, the form should be submitted to ensure time to process the request for support.

Applications are also accepted from second year students who were not eligible last year, who may be eligible this year due to a change in circumstances.

Note: Second year returning students, who were in receipt of the Bursary during their first year of study, need not complete another application form. They will be sent an online declaration to complete at the beginning of their second year of study.

It should also be noted that giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect/ overpayment may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered. This may lead to a referral to the police.

Should you have questions about the online form or require support with the application process please get in touch with the Finance team by emailing: finance@colchsfc.ac.uk or telephoning 01206 500735.

(b) Student Support: Vulnerable Bursary and Contribution to Food Costs. For those students experiencing financial hardship but not eligible for type (a) above.

The Government provides limited funding for those full-time students living in financial hardship and where there is no alternative scheme to provide them with support. The funding has been provided to respond to hardship needs, particularly those which arise through a sudden change in circumstances. Normally the assessment of both the educational need and the degree of hardship is carried out by a Senior Tutor and in conjunction with the Assistant Principal (Pastoral). The assessment will be based upon financial hardship as demonstrated by an assessment of household circumstances, including an income assessment, together with identification of a

specific financial need related to the student's education at College and which, if not addressed, would result in a student being unable to take part fully in the College learning experience.

If a student is not eligible for the bursary and wishes to apply for financial help, they will be expected to see their Senior Tutor. The student will need to explain the situation and, in the event that the Senior Tutor feels that financial help should be offered, the student will be given a loan from College funds. Loans can be made to cover College specific needs, for example travel, to purchase books or other academically related resources or to allow a student to take part in College activities. A repayment plan must be agreed at the time the loan is authorised, with all outstanding amounts cleared by the end of the academic year. Parents are usually informed if a loan agreement is organised. If the student can subsequently provide evidence of financial hardship, then the loan may be converted to a non-repayable Discretionary Award.

Evidence

The Evidence requirements for a Discretionary Award are similar to those for a Bursary Award in (a) above, but may include more detailed information from a parent/ guardian regarding changes in circumstances.

Note Students must notify College of any change in their circumstances, they will not be expected to repay an award but will be expected to repay a loan. Any award will be subject to a student's continued attendance at College and compliance with all College academic and pastoral expectations.

(c) 'Higher' Bursary Award

Students in care, care leavers and young people in receipt of Income Support (or Universal Credit) and disabled young people in receipt of Personal Independent Payments (or disability Living Allowance) and Employment and Support Allowance (or Universal Credit) in their own right will be eligible to receive a Higher-Level Bursary to support them with the costs of participation in college.

How to apply – Students should complete the Higher-Level Bursary Award application found on the website [The Sixth Form College Colchester - Finance \(colchsfc.ac.uk\)](http://TheSixthFormCollegeColchester-Finance.colchsfc.ac.uk) along with the relevant documentation.

If you need help and support completing this form, then students should speak with the Finance team or their Senior Tutor.

(d) Childcare Support

Students who have dependent children may be eligible for financial support towards the costs of childcare and travel. Application forms and guidance notes are available on:

[Care to Learn: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/overview)

Appeals and Complaints Procedures

Should a student or parent/ guardian wish to appeal against a decision regarding student support, the matter will be referred to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral) and ultimately to the Principal.