

Learner Support Fund Policy

16-18 Programme Award (SPA) 2020/2021

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Principalship Lead	Vice Principal
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SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The policy details how the College will offer financial support to Students across the College through the Learners Support Fund mechanism, considering Covid 19 impact measures.

Financial support will be offered to:

- 16-18 Students (including Students aged 19 progressing from Year 1 to Year 2 of a 2-year enrolled programme)
- 19-24 Students with Education Care and Health Plan (EHCP)

The LSF helps to provide financial support towards the cost of studying and more specifically will offer support for:

- Travel for Students (Not including Students who are eligible for “OUR PASS”)
- Subsistence
- Personal Hardship (clothing, personal care etc.)
- Essential curriculum kit, equipment (including Laptops, iPads and data)

The College help to provide financial support for the following:

- College Ambassadors
- Breakfast Tea & Toast

POLICY

The LSF funds are limited and not guaranteed these will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and will close when the full allocation has been spent. The fund will be reviewed on a Monthly basis. The college reserve the right to adjust the criteria in year according to funds available, individual needs and personal circumstances.

Additional Support Bursary (Vulnerable Students)

The most vulnerable Students are defined as:

- in care (including unaccompanied Asylum Seekers)
- care leavers (including unaccompanied Asylum Seekers)
- 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

The College may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. The College reserves the right to refuse a student’s application on this basis. Similarly, students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate and the College will not automatically award students £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

Students studying for at least 30 weeks per year will be eligible for the additional support bursary of up to, but not a guaranteed sum of £1,200 a year (Travel support will be provided via the “OUR PASS”. For students aged 18 on or after 31 August 2020, the college will provide travel support). All Students in receipt of the additional support bursary will receive, as a maximum of 6 x £200 or a pro rata

payment based on the award. Payments starting in November 2019 and will continue to April 2020. Students studying for less than 30 weeks will be entitled to pro rata £1,200.

The additional support bursary is based on a financial assessment and need. Eligible Students in receipt of the additional support bursary may also receive support with meals but will only be eligible for other financial support in exceptional circumstances.

LEARNERS SUPPORT FUNDS (LSF)

- Students aged 16-18 (Students must be under 19 on 31st August 2019 or on 31st August 2020 for Students progressing from Year 1 to Year 2 of a 2-year enrolled study programme) and with a household income of £16,190 are eligible for financial support as per Appendix 1. Students who become 19 during the year will continue to receive financial support until the end of the academic year.

Free travel for 16 to 18 year olds

The “OUR PASS” Scheme is operation throughout Greater Manchester as of 01/07/2019 and will provide Manchester’s 16-18-year old’s free bus travel on all local bus services across the region, making it easier to access education, work, training, culture and leisure opportunities in the city.

1. Students must be a Greater Manchester resident, and aged at least 16 and under 18 on Saturday 31 August 2020.
2. There is a £10 administration fee to be paid by the student.
3. Students with a current igo card will be notified when they become eligible for “OUR PASS”
4. “OUR PASS” will be valid until 31 August after the Students 18th birthday (or until their 18th birthday, if this is 31 August).
5. Lost or stolen cards (SPA or Our Pass) will cost £10 to replace, which will not be covered by the College. Any Student found misusing their bus pass will be subject to the Student disciplinary procedures.

16 to 18 College travel (SPA)

College Travel award will only be provided to Students who are not eligible for “OUR PASS” this will usually be students who live outside the GM area or are 18 on or after 31st August 2020.

Due to Covid 19 the college is operating a phased return starting from 3 to 6 hours per week in term one and increasing, following National and Local guidelines.

*For the first few weeks of the September term, students will receive a System One scratch card for the day/s in college. Based on behaviour and attendance students will thereafter receive: -

- A cash payment equivalent to a one-day pass at £5.70 for term one
- A cash payment equivalent to a two-day pass at £11.40 for term two
- Students will receive a 3-month System One travel pass in term 3

All payments will be operated using the BACS payment system by the Bursary Team. Attendance will be monitored and the College reserves the right to stop payments.

*We will be monitoring attendance and although this is an example all awards will be based on individual curriculum timetables and requirements.

Students who lose or misplace the SPA bus pass will incur a fee of £10 to obtain a replacement from the bus company. Refunds are not available if a bus pass is later found. Whilst the bus pass is being replaced, there will be no replacement funds available. Any Student found misusing their bus pass will be subject to the Student disciplinary procedures.

Subsistence – Meal Allowances

EFA Free Meal Allocation

Students in receipt of a **means tested benefit, child tax credits Or Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding £7.400** are entitled to £2.50 (depending on profile) meal allowance for each day that they are in College or home studying and when they are off-site as part of their Programme of Study e.g. when carrying out a work placement or work experience.

Due to Covid 19 the college is operating a phased return starting from 3 to 6 hours per week in term one and increasing, following National and Local guidelines. However, we will continue to support students and facilitate the ability to buy lunches for both on site and home study.

*Students will receive between £2.50 loaded onto their ID card for the day/s in college and subsequent payments while studying at home will be paid into a bank account. All payments made will be to a maximum of £7.50. All payments will be operated using the BACS payment system by the Bursary Team. Attendance will be monitored and the College reserves the right to stop payments.

*We will be monitoring attendance and although this is an example all awards will be based on individual curriculum timetables and requirements. Allocations will be reviewed on a regular basis and students informed of any changes.

19-24 Students with Education Care and Health Plan (EHCP)

Students are entitled to £2.50 (depending on profile) meal allowance for each day that they are in College and when they are off-site as part of their Programme of Study e.g. when carrying out a work placement or work experience.

Meal allowances will be available via the College ID card each week. Where Students cannot access the cashless vending system, such as those Students on work placement or who are based in community provision, appropriate alternative payment methods will be put in place.

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*We will be monitoring attendance and although this is an example all awards will be based on individual curriculum timetables and requirements. Allocations will be reviewed on a regular basis and students informed of any changes.

Personal Hardship

We have increased the Hardship provision to be held centrally to support Students who experience sudden, unavoidable and extreme hardship e.g. homelessness. Furthermore, in reaction to the estimated numbers of job losses due to Covid 19. 243,000 residents in Manchester work in 'Shutdown

sectors” that are under threat - including non-food and non-pharmaceutical retail, travel, childcare, arts and domestic services.

Desirable Kit & Equipment

kits and equipment for a course can be provided up to a maximum cost of £75 per learner depending on curriculum area. Payments will be operated using the BACS payment system by the Bursary Team or direct transfer to a department as deemed appropriate.

Laptops, iPads and data

Due to the increase number of students working remotely the college will provide equipment. This will include Laptops, iPads and data for internet connection. What equipment is needed will be determined by the curriculum department and will only be offered to students who do not have any access to equipment at home.

Students will be asked if they have access to IT at home during the enrolment process. Any equipment award will be prioritised to student who have identified as having no viable access to equipment.

Student will be expected to sign the college acceptable use of IT policy and college agreement form. Students will not be issued with any equipment until this has been returned. Any student found to be using equipment inappropriately, the College reserves the right to stop any services and request the return of any equipment. If students are asked to leave or leave their course due to other reasons, we will expect the equipment returned to the college.

PROCESS

Any Students wishing to apply for Students Support Funds will need to complete an application form and produce proof of household income.

Proof of household income can be evidenced through:

- P60
- Tax Credit Award Letter (Child or Working)
- Benefit Award Letter
- Universal Credit
- Part IV Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed element of the State Pension Credit
- Wage slips for last 3 months
- Self-assessment tax calculation or certified accounts
- Evidence of self-employment

To be eligible for an EFA Free meal allowance (**means tested benefit**) a learner must be in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based JSA
- Income related ESA
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of the State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- WTC run-on
- Universal Credit

* Where a Student is in receipt of any of the above AND working tax credits, the above benefits over-ride the WTC and entitle the learner to a meal allowance.

Confirmation of the allocation will be sent to the student's email within **15 working days**.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for an allocation Students must be:

- Aged over 16
- Aged under 19 on 31st August 2019 (or 31st August 2018 for those Students progressing to a 2nd year of a 2-year enrolled study programme)
- Aged between 19 and 24 and subject to a LDA or EHCP
- Aged 16 to 18 and enrolled to an ESF programme
- Enrolled to a The Manchester College course
- Eligible for ESFA or ESF funding
- Have a good attendance Pattern in line with the college expectations
- Meet the minimum criteria relating to household income

Young Offenders are eligible for the Learners Support Funds if they are:

- serving a non-custodial sentence
- redeemed early from a custodial sentence
- remanded to a non-secure institution
- Work based Students will only be eligible for the Learners Support Funds in exceptional circumstances.

Eligibility criteria apply subject to status and all funding correct at time of publication.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Students can expect an inclusive and supportive learning environment whatever their background.

LOCATION AND ACCESS TO THIS POLICY

Learner MY Day Portal
College Website
Careers, Employability & Welfare Service
Customer Services

Appendix 1 - 16-18 Programme of Study Award

	Income below £16,190	Income Above £16,190
Travel	Only if not eligible for "OUR PASS"	N/A
Meal Allowance – Means Tested Benefits	EFA will fund the cost of meals whilst in College up to £2.50 per day	N/A
Desirable Kit and Equipment	The Programme of Study Award will fund desirable kit and equipment only up to a maximum value of £75 per learner depending on curriculum area	N/A
Hardship	Allocated on a case by case basis	Allocated on a case by case basis. Via Careers, Employability and Welfare and Student Experience.
Ambassador Awards	£10 WHSmith voucher per event – maximum of 10 events in any academic year	£10 WHSmith per event – maximum of 10 events in any academic year