



# Boston High School Sixth Form 16-19 Bursary and Free School Meals

## Boston High School 16-19 Bursary Fund and Free School meals

### **What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a limited amount of money made available from the government through its funding body, the Education Funding Agency to provide assistance to students whose access to, or completion of education is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers.

### **Vulnerable Group Category**

This category is now defined as a student who is receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or a partner.

The vulnerable group category that refers to a student being in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments plus Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit has been re-worded slightly to aid clarity, reflecting feedback from stakeholders.

### **Who is eligible to apply for the 16-19 Bursary?**

Students must satisfy one or more of the following criteria:-

- ▶ be aged over 16 and under 19 at 31 August 2024.
- ▶ meet the residency criteria in academic year funding regulations for post-16 provision
- ▶ be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (ie Ofsted), the provision must also be either
- ▶ funded directly by EFA or by EFA via a local authority
- ▶ otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including Level 3) accredited by Ofqual or pursuant to Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000
- ▶ a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

### **Who is not eligible for the 16-19 Bursary?**

- Students under 16 years of age or over 19 years of age on 31.08.24.
- Students who do not meet the residency qualifications.
- Students who do not fulfil any of the criteria described above.

### **Residency qualifications**

All applicants should satisfy the residence criteria. This can be found at;

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentsupport/funding/b00203354/efa-funding>

### **Types of Bursary**

There are 2 types of 16-19 bursary available:

**1. Vulnerable student bursary: You could get a bursary worth up to £1,200, depending on circumstances and benefits. You could get up to £1,200 if at least one of the following applies:**

- you're in or recently left local authority care
- you get Income Support or Universal Credit because you're financially supporting yourself
- you get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- you get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit

A letter of which must be provided to support your application. If you are successful with this application, this bursary will be paid on a monthly/termly basis via BACS/cheque.

**2. Discretionary bursary: You could get a discretionary bursary if you 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. You could receive this level of funding if one of the following is applicable:**

- You have a gross annual household income of below £21,700.

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- You are in receipt of Free School Meals.
- Your household is in receipt of other income based means-tested benefits.

Boston High School will take in to account annual household income, number of dependents for example, to cater to the individual needs of the student. This bursary can provide support for transport, school uniform, school equipment and essential school visits.

### **Emergency Support**

You **could** receive this level of funding if you have an identifiable financial need and your gross annual household income is below £25,000.

### **How Boston High School will assess applications and allocate 16-19 Bursary funding?**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a limited fund. Initially students, who are eligible for any level of funding, should complete the application form and submit it to Mrs Wise, Director of Key Stage 5.

Students who become eligible during the course of the academic year should contact Mrs Wise, Director of Key Stage 5, so an application for funding based on their new circumstances. Termly reminders will be sent to students/parents and carers, for both new applications and updates on current applicants.

**Proof of household income** will be required to support the application. Please **include 2** of the following documents to support this application:

- Certified letter from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs regarding benefits and/ or household income Tax
- Credit Award Notice (most recent, full and up to date)
- Certified letter from the Department of Work and Pensions
- P60 (additional evidence will also be required)
- Self-Employment Income evidence (3 x pay slips)
- Any other information regarding means tested benefits.

It is important to note that the available fund is extremely limited. The school is under no obligation to make payments or re-imburements and 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.

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:

- ▶ **They must maintain a minimum of 95% attendance, 90% with evidence.**
- ▶ **There must be no unauthorised absences during the school day or persistent lateness.**
- ▶ **They must maintain acceptable levels of behaviour, as outlined in the schools CODE.**

Boston High School Sixth Form students are role models. Should at any point during an academic year, a student's behaviour points reach 30, a meeting will take place with Mrs Wise, Director of Key Stage 5 to discuss this further.

### **Attendance Requirements**

Students will only receive bursary funding if they have secured a minimum of 95% attendance at School including morning and afternoon registration. The only exceptions to this rule include the following:

- Medical Procedure or illness supported by a Doctor's Certificate, Hospital letter or letter from parents/carer.
- Hospital Appointment (a hospital documentation or note from parent in planner).
- University Interview/University Open Day.
- School Trip Excursion.
- Official School Closure i.e. snow day.
- Official School Study Leave. Home Study can only be taken following a student's final taught lesson of the 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:

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

### **How do I use my Bursary?**

If you qualify for Vulnerable Support funding then this money will be paid directly to you on a monthly/termly basis. It is therefore up to you on how you choose to use it to best support your education.

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If you qualify for Discretionary funding you will complete an order/request form outlining the support needed, how it will be used and how it will help to support your education. This request will be processed and either granted or rejected. Where possible the school will pay for the items directly, for example books, stationary, bus passes uniform etc. All orders must be processed via the Sixth Form office. Boston High School will determine the assessment criteria for eligibility for discretionary bursaries and the frequency of payments for all awards. The school will either purchase items on behalf of the student or payments will be made via BACS transfer upon receiving receipts for any school equipment purchased. Where students are claiming money back for fuel (outside of a 3 mile radius only) receipts will be collected and stamped and paid via BACS every 2 weeks.

Boston High School will need to reserve 20% (including the 5% Administration fee) of the 16-19 Bursary amount provided. This is to accommodate changes in circumstance and ensure that requests for funding from students can be accommodated.

### **What happens if my financial circumstances change during the year?**

A student receiving Bursary must immediately inform a member of the Sixth Form team of any changes in family circumstance that may affect their 'Support Level'.

If a student is not in receipt of any level bursary and financial circumstances change during the academic year, please contact Mrs Wise, Director of Key Stage 5.

### **How will I know whether I have qualified for the Bursary or not?**

You will receive a letter confirming whether or not you have been successful with this application.

### **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 Mrs Wise, Director of Key Stage 5. It is expected that further evidence to support the funding request will be provided by the student if called upon.

# **Free School Meals**

## **Institution eligibility**

To be eligible for a free meal, students must be enrolled in further education provision funded via Education Funding Agency at:

- general further education colleges, including specialist colleges
- sixth-form colleges
- independent learning providers
- higher education institutions (HEIs) with ESFA 16 to 19 funding
- specialist post-16 institutions (SPIs)
- local authorities (LAs) and FE institutions directly funded for 16 to 19
- 16 to 18 traineeship providers
- European Social Fund (ESF) only institutions
- 16 to 19 only academies and free schools
- 16 to 19 only maintained schools

## **Student eligibility**

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2022 to be eligible to receive a free meal. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an EHCP.

These 2 groups of aged 19 plus students can receive a free meal while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues.

The following groups of students are not eligible for free meals in further education:

- students aged between 14 and 16 (these students are already covered by FSM provision)
- students aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme, unless they have an EHCP or are a 19+ continuer
- apprentices, including those with an EHCP

## **Eligible benefits**

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. Free meals in further education defines disadvantage as students 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 guarantee 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 HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- UC with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 for each year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)

A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, have made a successful application to the institution where they are enrolled.

It is important that institutions ensure they understand that a parent or student must be in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits set out above to be eligible.

Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for free meals, and a parent or student in receipt of Working Tax Credits is not entitled to a free meal (this is a common question sent to ESFA). Qualifying benefits do include the Working Tax Credit run-on which is paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

From 1 April 2018, any student who is in receipt of, or has parents who are in receipt of, UC must have a net earned annual income of no more than £7,400 to be eligible for free meals.

Students must also satisfy the residency criteria set out in our [funding regulations guidance](#).

## **Transitional protection arrangements**

Boston High School is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 8314283. The Registered Office address is as detailed above.

Eligibility criteria introduced under UC from 1 April 2018 will result in some households becoming eligible for free meals and others falling outside of the eligibility criteria. DfE has put transitional protection arrangements in place to provide certainty for families and ensure they do not experience a sudden loss of free meals.

The protection arrangements apply as follows:

- all students already receiving free meals from 1 April 2018 will continue to receive free meals whilst UC is rolled out until March 2023 and then until the end of the course they are enrolled on at this point. This will apply even if their household earnings rise above the new threshold during that time
- any student who becomes eligible for free meals after the threshold has been introduced will also continue to receive free meals during the UC rollout until March 2023 and then until the end of the course they are enrolled on. This will apply even if they subsequently become ineligible during this period because their household earnings rise above the new threshold

Institutions do not need to carry out any further eligibility checks for these protected families during this period. They may wish to note the students as 'protected' in their free meals auditable records.

Institutions should seek to identify students who are eligible to receive free meals under the transitional protection. If a student transferring in from a school falls under the transitional protection rules, we recommend the institution, where possible, obtain evidence of FSM eligibility from the previous school or local authority. If a student is transferring in from a previous further education funded institution, we recommend the institution obtains evidence from that provider where possible. Institutions should retain appropriate evidence of eligibility for audit purposes. The department is also exploring options for providing historical FSM information to help institutions identify students who are protected and should continue to receive a free meal.

Where institutions are unable to verify previous eligibility for free meals using the approaches above, they may wish to consider seeking evidence from the student/their parent, for example, by requesting a copy of previous entitlement letters.

A student who has not previously claimed free meals is only eligible to receive one when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, have made a successful application to the institution where they are enrolled. Once UC is fully rolled out, any students receiving free meals who no longer meet the eligibility criteria at that point (because they are earning above the threshold) will continue to receive protection until they complete their 16 to 19 funded education. 19+ continuers and students aged 19 and over with EHCPs will continue to receive protection until the end of their current programme of study.

Students who make a first application in the 2022 to 2023 academic year and who have household earnings above the threshold will not be eligible for free meals.

These changes for the upcoming year are merely a snapshot. Please ensure that you fully read the updates using the links below.

Free School Meals

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions#changes-for-the-2018-to-2019-academic-year>

16-19 Bursary Fund

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2018-to-2019-academic-year>

### **Verification of student eligibility**

The student, or their parent/carer, must submit an application for free meals and/or the 16-19 Bursary Fund to Boston High School as soon as they are enrolled or as early as possible dependent on circumstances. As part of the application, Boston High School asks that the student (or their parent/carer) provides evidence of the award of the qualifying benefits, for example an award notice or letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) or HMRC. Boston High School uses a combined application form and process for free meals and the 16 to 19 Bursary.

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