

Name of Policy

DISCRETIONARY LEARNER SUPPORT FUND (BURSARY FUND) – FOR STUDENTS AGED 16-18 YRS

Policy objectives

The objective of the policy is to ensure transparency for students regarding their eligibility for support from the Learner Support Fund.

The aim of the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (dLSF) is to support and assist students on their course of study by ensuring that finance is not a barrier to their learning.

Author / Job Title

Head of Student Services and Support

**Equality Assessment
By Whom**

Date

Version

2

**Date of next review
(month & year)**

05/2016

Approved by

	Date
Senior Manager: Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality	13 July 2015
SMT	13 July 2015
Corporation	

Related policies or procedures or parent policy if applicable

Discretionary Learner Support Fund – For Students Aged 19+
24+ Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Policy

Groups/bodies consulted in the development of the policy

To be published on College website

YES

**DISCRETIONARY LEARNER SUPPORT FUND BURSARY
POLICY FOR 2015- 2016
FOR STUDENTS AGED 16 – 18 YRS**

Background

The 16-18 bursary scheme is specifically aimed at students aged between 16 and 18 years facing financial hardship in accessing education. Students aged 19 – 24 who have a LDA or EHCP will be funded via the 16-18 dLSF.

The College will be responsible for allocating bursary awards to students either as cash payments or with payment in kind for course expenses.

The College will make awards based upon a proven hardship need which must be substantiated by evidence which will be retained in accordance with audit requirements.

Means Test

Vulnerable groups will be assessed against specific criteria (see below). Priorities 1 and 2 will be determined via means testing, based on parental income, and evidence such as income support, JSA, WTC documentation or wage slips will be required to support applications.

The priority groups are as follows.

Priority Vulnerable

Vulnerable students

A bursary of at least £1,200 per year is to be allocated to vulnerable students. This is a mandatory amount. However, young people need to meet agreed attendance and code of conduct criteria to receive the full payment. Evidence for this group will be Social Services/Local Council letters, Income Support, ESA/DLA letters etc.

Young people in this category have been identified by the government as the following:

- Young people in care or care leavers
- Young people receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right
- Disabled young people receiving **BOTH** Employment Support Allowance and either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment

Students in this category can expect to receive the following from Macclesfield College:

- 10 monthly payments of £120 (paid by BACS mid-month September – June)
- College meals paid via an electronic payment card (£10 per week)
- Course costs to be fully met by College bursary fund eg trips/kit and uniform
- Printer Credit - £1 per month will be automatically added to the student's account
- Travel – Arriva or College bus pass waived (full 3 terms) or bus/train tickets paid monthly.

All payments will be subject to the student meeting the following attendance and behaviour criteria:

- Satisfactory attendance at or above 90%
- No disciplinary action above Stage 1

Should a student not meet the criteria an interview will be arranged with the Head of Student Services and Support to determine level of payment.

Students on part time/short courses within this priority group will receive pro-rata amounts.

Priority 1

Household income below £25,521

Evidence for this group will be Working Tax Credit documentation, Universal Credit, JSA, Income Support etc.

These students will be eligible to receive the following from Macclesfield College (subject to sufficient funds being available):

- College meals paid via an electronic payment card (£10 per week)
- Material Costs: course specific - fully funded
- Trip costs: course specific - fully funded excluding trips under £10
- Printer Credit - £1 per month will be automatically added to the student's account
- Travel – Arriva or College bus pass waived (the full 3 terms) or bus/train tickets paid monthly

All payments will be subject to the student meeting the following attendance and behaviour criteria:

- Attendance minimum level of 90%
- No disciplinary action above Stage 1

Should a student not meet the criteria an interview will be arranged with the Head of Student Services and Support to determine level of payment.

Priority 2

Should the household income be above £25,521 applications will be welcome and allocation will be based on need and availability of funds.

College Bursary

Where a student requires additional funding due to individual circumstances the College can issue a College bursary irrespective of household income. Students must be able to demonstrate additional/exceptional hardship eg homelessness, estranged from parents etc and will be subject to an interview and additional monitoring by Student Services. Students will be required to maintain good standards of attendance and commitment to their course. All support will be based on individual circumstances and the support could comprise any of the following:

- contribution to College meals
- additional material costs
- additional trip costs
- one off grant
- assistance with travel costs

Eligibility

Funding is available to students meeting the above criteria if they are a “home student” ie has been resident in the country for three or more years and are studying a programme of learning funded by the EFA, or is an EU national. They must be 16 years of age and over.

Eligible students can receive funding for the duration of their progressive programme, eg NVQ 1 - 3 (3 years funding), Introductory Diploma - National Diploma (4 years funding).

Students wishing to or those required to, repeat a level in a related or different subject area, will be assessed on an individual basis.

Application Procedure

Students will need to complete an application form for assistance. Forms are available from Student Services or from www.macclesfield.ac.uk/support/finance

Completed forms should be handed in to Student Services with all supporting documentation. The application will be delayed should the student provide insufficient evidence. All payments are paid by BACS and as such applicants are required to provide bank details.

A letter advising the student of eligibility will be sent within 15 days of receiving a fully completed application and the student invited to attend an interview to discuss conditions and procedures for collecting funding. Details of the decision are recorded on the student's form and stored within Student Services.

PAYMENT METHOD

All claim forms, except childcare, will be processed by Student Services on the 1st Monday of each month. Childcare claims will be processed each Monday (Tuesday in the case of a bank holiday).

In all cases the student's attendance is checked to ensure that it is 90% or above in each element of study. If a student fails to meet the required attendance level in English and Maths payment will be withheld irrespective of their attendance on their main programme.

English and Maths are a compulsory part of the study programme and as such, failure to attend these lessons will result in the college funding being withheld by the EFA. Therefore any claims for materials or travel will not be paid if the student fails to maintain an attendance level of 90% or above in these subjects.

On rare occasions it may be necessary to pay claims where the attendance is below the College minimum. This is usually at the recommendation of the Personal Tutor and after discussions with the student. Details are recorded on the claim form.

The authorised claims will then be passed to Finance to raise cheques or BACS payments (if bank details have been provided). Cheques will be available for collection by the student from the Main Reception.

Appeals

Applicants have the right to appeal against a decision, which should be in writing to the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality, detailing the reasons for their appeal. A decision will be made within 10 working days and they will be notified of the outcome and reasons.