



## Gateshead College 16-19 Bursary Fund Statement

### Statement

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is provided by the Department for Education (DFE) to help students overcome specific barriers to participation, to enable them to remain in education.

The College is committed to maintaining the integrity of its Bursary Fund awards and the validity of its assessment of qualifying criteria and has effective procedures for resolving appeals.

This statement sets out the financial support available through, and eligibility for, bursary funding for 16-19 year old students enrolled at all campuses of Gateshead College.

The 16-19 Bursary funds are managed by the College and are allocated on a first come first served basis via an online application and assessment process. Applicants will be notified of their application outcome within 10 working days (this may vary at busiest times) of a completed application. <https://gateshead.paymystudent.com/portal/>

The rules within this statement are set at the time of writing but the College reserves the right to adjust the criteria in year according to the funds available and in accordance with any changes that the DFE may make.

- 1) There are two types of 16 to 19 bursary, Discretionary and Higher Rate:
  - a) **Discretionary Bursary:** awarded to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, free college meals, books and equipment. To be eligible the student must:
    - i. Be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2026 or 19 or over and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).
    - ii. Meet the residency criteria in DFE funding regulation for post-16 provision in the 2026 to 2027 academic year.
    - iii. Be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (for example OFSTED). The provision must also be either:
      - Funded directly by DFE or by DFE via a local authority.
      - Funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund.
      - Otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by OFQUAL or is pursuant to Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.
      - A 16 to 19 traineeship programme.
    - iv. To qualify for the Discretionary Bursary support:
      - Gross annual household income must be below £35,000 couple or £30,000 single including any Working Tax Credit/Universal Credit or
      - Receive one of the following benefits Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance/Income Related Employment and Support Allowance/Universal Credit/Guaranteed Pension Credit.



- v. Students with a gross annual household income of more than £35,000 couple or £30,000 single can still apply for Discretionary Bursary support providing the student can demonstrate they are facing financial hardship. In this instance the College will take into account any extenuating circumstances and a decision will be made.
  
- vi. An award for discretionary support may be awarded to eligible students where one or more of the following applies:
  - Specific equipment, books and or uniform are needed for the student to attend the course.
  - The student lives 1 mile or more from college and/or work placement and the cost of travel is a barrier to attending. Google maps are used to assess distance (shortest/quickest walking distance).
  - The student is facing unexpected financial hardship that is creating a barrier to attending College and or learning.
  
- b) **Higher Rate Bursary** Higher Rate bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups. To be eligible for the Higher Rate bursary, students must be in one of the defined vulnerable groups:
  - i. In care.
  - ii. Care leavers.
  - iii. Receiving Income Support.
  - iv. Receiving 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.
  - v. 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.
  - vi. The bursary awarded can be up to £1200 for those most at risk, based on actual financial need and not receiving funding from elsewhere eg Local Authority.
  - vii. Pro rata awards will be made to those students who start 6 weeks or later than the start of the course.

Where a student's circumstances change in-year and a student becomes eligible as a vulnerable learner, they will receive a pro-rata amount.

## 2) Not Eligible

- i. Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are employed, rather than in education.
- ii. Students who are aged 19 and over on 31 August 2026 are not eligible for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund unless they:
  - Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are attending eligible education provision; or
  - Are a 19+ continuer, in other words, a student who is continuing on an eligible Study Programme they began aged 16 to 18.



### 3) Free College Meals

- i. Free College Meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. For purposes of eligibility the students or their parents must be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:
- ii.
  - Universal Credit
  - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
  - The guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
  - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).
- iii. The food allowance will be made available to students aged between 16 and 18 years old (as at 31 August 2026). If a student turns 19 during the academic year they will remain eligible until the end of the academic year or until the course of study finishes. Students aged between 19 and 25 who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) are also eligible for a free school meal allowance.
- iv. A food allowance of £4.00 will be available each day that a student is timetabled to attend a course, including work placements. The allowance will be credited to their meal card/app from the free college meal allocation.
- v. Eligible students attending placement or who are based at College campus without catering facilities will receive a BACS payment per half term paid into their bank account.

### 4) Payments/Travel/Receipts

- i. Payments will be made direct into the student's bank account via the BACS system. It is best practice to make all bursary payments directly into the student's bank account (unless the student has an appointee to handle payments).
- ii. Those students over 1 mile who travel by Go North East (GNE) bus will receive a GNE App/Key Card Ticket.
- iii. Those students over 1 mile travelling by bus (other companies), metro or by car will be awarded a cash contribution (based on Local Authority area costs) towards travel costs on a half termly basis (monthly basis for Higher Rate Bursary).
- iv. Payments are usually made into bank accounts within 7 working days of being processed.
- v. Students who receive any BACS payments from the fund for course-related equipment, materials, meals or travel costs are required to retain and submit valid receipts or other acceptable proof of purchase. Failure to provide receipts may result in recovery of funds and/or suspension of future bursary payments. All claims must relate directly to agreed educational expenses as outlined in your bursary award.

Funding is limited, meaning evidence of eligibility does not guarantee an award. Students wishing to apply for financial support are advised to do so as soon as possible once fund opens in Summer.



**5) Attendance Criteria**

- i. First initial attendance criteria will be 1 or 2 days attendance at least 92%.
- ii. Attendance criteria is set at 92% and half termly awards can be stopped if a student does not meet the criteria (take into account any absence notes on system).
- iii. Less than 92% attendance for students in receipt of the Higher Rate Bursary, the following actions will be taken:
  - Contact relevant college staff (course tutor, learning facilitator) and request information (if any) to support continued financial support for learners.
  - Reduce payment to reflect attendance percentage.
  - Stop payment.

**6) Care to Learn Childcare:** awarded to help meet costs for Ofsted registered childcare for the children of 16 – 19 year-old students whilst they are studying.

- i. Terms & conditions of childcare awards:
  - Will make payments up to maximum of £180 per child per week.
  - Funding is only made for timetabled days in College plus 30 minutes travelling time before and after college hours.
  - Will regularly check attendance and course timetables and will reduce or withdraw any award if attendance proves unsatisfactory and/or timetables are changed (although every effort will be made to resolve any issues in the first instance)
  - Reserve the right to amend any part of the terms and conditions (although both parties will be given prior notice of this if it becomes necessary).
  - Will pay all claims monthly (Sept-June), in arrears, unless other arrangements have been agreed.
  - Will pay by the BACS system (directly into provider's bank account).
  - Will inform both parties of any changes in circumstances, payments, timetables or other changes that may affect the award.
  - Do not accept any liability for the terms and conditions of the contract. The contract for childcare provision is between the student and the provider.
  - If the child is eligible for 15 or 30 hours per week free early education, these must be used to cover the required sessions.
  - The college are not liable for any costs incurred that have not been agreed by the college. This includes any fees incurred prior to an award being made or fees incurred if you have not attended your course.
  - Student is liable for any costs incurred which are in excess of the maximum awards or are outside of your normal study time.



## 7) **Review/Appeals Process**

- a) A student can request review/appeal in writing or by emailing [support.funds@gateshead.ac.uk](mailto:support.funds@gateshead.ac.uk)
  - i. Stage 1 – Initial Review/Re-assessment - application will be re-assessed and a response will be given within 10 working days.
  - ii. Stage 2 – Further (Specific) Review – if not satisfied with the initial review can request a further review. Need to provide further information and/or evidence regarding financial need or household circumstances that were not apparent from original application. The application will then be reviewed by a lead person not involved in the original decision making and receive a response within 10 working days.
  - iii. Stage 3 – Appeal – if it is considered that the application has not been assessed correctly and feel they have grounds for appeal can write to the Support Funds Team clearly marking as an APPEAL. The appeal will be allocated to a lead person not involved in the original decision making and lead person will consult with Head of Student Services. A response will be given within 10 working days.

### **Context**

This statement applies to all 16-19 year old students enrolled at Gateshead College and sets out the financial support available through, and eligibility for, 16-19 Bursary Fund, Free College Meals and Care to Learn.

### **Location and access to the statement**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund Statement 2026-2027 and other supporting documents are available via Gateshead College Website – Help with costs