



Financial support for students

1 **Policy statement**

King Edward VI College has two allocations of funds from the Education Skills Funding Agency (DfE) and one allocation of funds from the College Trustees:

1. 16-19 bursary fund (DfE)

This provides 2 types of bursary

- a. Bursaries of up to £1200 for vulnerable groups
- b. Discretionary bursaries

Each category of funding is administered by the College according to criteria determined by the College but subject to national guidelines.

2. Free meals (DfE)

This category of fund is administered by the College according to criteria determined by government policy.

3. Non-Compulsory trips (College Trustees)

This category of funding is administered by the College after being requested by a confirmed student in receipt of either Vulnerable Student Bursary or Discretionary Bursary. The student may request funding towards a non-compulsory subject related trip, via the Bursary support administrator(s) after paying a deposit for the trip.

2 **Policy aims**

King Edward VI College aims to have a workable and fair system of allocation for the distribution of funds, targeted at those most in need.

3 **Application of the policy**

3.1 **Vulnerable Student Bursary**

A bursary award equivalent of up to a maximum of £1,200 may be available for young people studying a course lasting 30 weeks or more (pro-rata payments for less than 30 weeks) who fall within one of the defined vulnerable groups in current DfE guidance and who have actual financial need that would be a barrier to participation. The defined vulnerable groups are:

- young people in care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children;
- care leavers;
- young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right because they are financially supporting themselves, or themselves and a dependent partner or child;

- young people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their own right, and Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

Students in these groups are not automatically entitled to a cash payment of £1,200. The College will assess each student's actual participation costs and may provide support in kind, cash, or a combination of both, in line with DfE guidance

3.2 Discretionary Student Bursary

Discretionary bursaries are cash-limited and are intended to support students from low-income households with essential costs of participation. Support may contribute to travel, books, equipment, stationery, compulsory trips, specialist clothing, sports kit required for the study programme, and other essential course-related costs.

A student may be considered for a discretionary bursary where they are:

- aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August in the relevant funding year; or
- a 19+ continuer on the same study programme they began aged 16 to 18; or
- aged 19 or over and have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

For the 2026/27 academic year, the College household income threshold for considering a discretionary bursary application is £32,000 inclusive of benefits (or an equivalent assessed income where the student is living independently).

Meeting the household income threshold does not guarantee an award. All awards will be based on an assessment of individual circumstances, actual participation costs, available funds, and evidence of household income. In assessing priority, the College may also take account of factors such as travel distance, dependent children in the household, and sudden changes in financial circumstances.

3.3 Free meals

Eligibility for free meals will be determined in accordance with the DfE free meals in further education guidance in force for the relevant academic year. Free meals are separate from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, and eligibility for one does not automatically confer eligibility for the other.

A student may be eligible for free meals where they are enrolled on eligible DfE-funded further education provision and are:

- aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026; or
- a 19+ continuer on the same study programme they began before turning 19; or
- aged 19 or over and have an Education, Health and Care Plan

For the 2026/27 academic year, students will be eligible for free meals where the student or their parent/carer is in receipt of one or more of the qualifying benefits set out in DfE guidance. This includes:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided the person is not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and has an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Universal Credit

From the start of academic year 2026/27, all recipients of Universal Credit will be entitled to a free meal. Transitional protections applying up to the end of academic year 2025/26 will no longer apply from that point, and students must meet the 2026/27 eligibility criteria in order to receive a free meal.

Students must apply to the College and provide appropriate evidence of entitlement. The College will assess entitlement in line with DfE guidance and will retain appropriate evidence for audit purposes. The College will keep eligibility under review in accordance with DfE requirements.

Entitlement to free meals will be assessed as part of the discretionary bursary fund application

Students must have applied to the institution where they are enrolled by completing a 16-19 bursary fund application via the online portal.

3.4 Non-Compulsory trips (College Trustees)

The funds available for non-compulsory trips are cash limited and therefore are not guaranteed. They are awarded to confirmed students in receipt of either Vulnerable Student Bursary or Discretionary Bursary. A confirmed student can request funding for a non-compulsory subject related trip, after paying the deposit for the trip and contacting the Bursary support administrator(s). A student can request the following subsidies from the College Trustees funding:

- 100% subsidy for a non-compulsory day trip, with a limit of 3 per academic year.
- 75% subsidy for a non-compulsory domestic residential trip, with a limit of 1 per academic year.
- 75% subsidy for a non-compulsory international residential trip, with a limit of 1 per academic year.

Allocation of this funding is cash limited, and available on a first come-first served basis.

To support families on low incomes, the initial deposit to secure a place on a trip will be set at £50.

For non-compulsory subject-related trips, all applications for trip funding will be limited to those students in greatest financial need: those in receipt of free meals or considered vulnerable.

4 Policy guidelines

4.1 All applications for the 16-19 Bursary are to be submitted via the PayMyStudent portal.

4.2 Detailed guidance on the application and appeals process is provided in the financial support for students guidance notes, available on the college web-site or from the Bursary Administrators.

4.3 All categories of funding are subject to available funds. Bursary support is conditional on students meeting agreed attendance, behaviour and engagement expectations, which will be set out clearly in the application and/or award documentation.

Where a student does not meet the agreed conditions, payments may be reduced, suspended or withheld. The College will always consider the individual circumstances of the student before making such a decision, including disability, serious illness, caring responsibilities and other exceptional circumstances.

4.4 Students may have received an award in previous years; this is no guarantee of future awards. Students must make an application and provide new evidence each academic year.

4.5 The College will make awards based upon individual needs. These must be substantiated by evidence which will be retained in accordance with audit requirements. Evidence of all current household income, inclusive of benefits, will be required to support all claims.

4.6 The 16-19 bursary fund is cash limited and can only be allocated whilst funding lasts.

4.7 Each application is judged based on 'relative financial need'; not all applications will be successful.

4.8 Personal tutors will advise students, whenever possible and applicable, of other forms of financial support that may be available to them.

4.9 The discretionary bursary household income threshold is reviewed annually and approved by the Finance and Business Manager. For the 2026/27 academic year, the threshold for consideration is £32,000 inclusive of benefits.

This threshold is used to identify potential eligibility only. Awards are not automatic and will be determined by reference to individual financial need, actual participation costs and the funds available

4.10 For successful applicants, payments in kind will be awarded for the cost of any books, equipment, resources, or compulsory trips relevant to the student's programme of study.

4.11 For successful applicants, financial support for travel to and from college will be awarded in the form of termly bank transfers into a bank account in the student's name. Payments will be made to students once their applications are approved, with the first payment being made by the end of September. Students should purchase the appropriate travel pass at the start of term and send their receipt to bursary@kedst.ac.uk. Students will be required to submit receipts for their travel on a termly basis.

4.12 Any additional payments that are necessary will be made by bank transfer, into a bank account in the student's name. All payments are required to be substantiated by a receipt/order confirmation, which should be submitted to bursary@kedst.ac.uk.

4.13 Bursary funds are provided to support the costs of attending College and participating in study. Where a student does not meet the agreed conditions for payment, the College may reduce, suspend or withhold future payments.

The College may also seek repayment where a payment has been made in error, where false or misleading information has been provided, where there has been an overpayment, or where funds have not been used for the agreed purpose. Any recovery decision will take account of the individual circumstances of the student and will be explained in writing.

4.14 The 16 to 19 bursary is awarded on the condition that students maintain agreed standards of attendance, behaviour and academic engagement.

Students are normally expected to maintain at least 95% attendance across timetabled lessons, unless there are approved absences or exceptional circumstances.

Students are also expected to demonstrate good behaviour, comply with the College Student Code of Conduct, and engage with their studies.

If attendance, behaviour or engagement give cause for concern, bursary payments may be reduced, suspended or withdrawn at the discretion of the Bursary Support Team, following consideration of the student's individual circumstances. Exceptions may be made where there is appropriate evidence of medical need, disability, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances.

Appeals against a bursary decision can be made using the process set out in Annex 1 of this policy.

4.15 If a student’s financial circumstances change during the academic year (e.g., loss of employment, change in household income, change in benefits), they must notify the Bursary Support Team immediately.

Failure to report significant financial changes may result in adjustments to bursary payments or a request to repay funds if overpayment has occurred.

4.16 The College recognises that some students may face additional financial barriers beyond household income. The Bursary Support Team will consider additional discretionary support for:

- Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) requiring specific resources.
- Young carers who may face fluctuating financial hardship.
- Students experiencing temporary financial crisis, such as family breakdown or eviction.

Students in these situations are encouraged to speak confidentially to the Bursary Support Team to explore additional funding options.

4.17 The College supports the principles of equality and diversity in the disbursement of the fund and monitors the distribution of the fund across various student cohort groups including ethnicity, gender, and disability. The impact of the fund on students’ attendance, retention, and achievement is considered by senior managers and governors.

4.18 Awards from the 16-19 Bursary Fund may only be back dated to the start of the academic term in which the application is received.

4.19 In line with DfE guidance, the College may use up to 5% of the relevant annual allocation for administration of the scheme. Where the College receives both a 16 to 19 Bursary Fund allocation and a free meals in FE allocation, it may use up to 5% of the combined allocation, provided the amount taken does not exceed 5% of the total allocation received for that year.

5 Equality Impact

The College’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy has been taken into account when considering this policy.

Date of review	Date agreed	JCC	Governors	Review date	Comments
February 2026	April 2026	N/A	LGB 25/03/2026	February 2027	

Appeals Process

We are committed to ensuring that decisions relating to financial support are made fairly, transparently and in line with policy. However, we recognise that students and/or their families may wish to appeal a decision.

Grounds for Appeal

An appeal may be submitted where:

- There is reason to believe an error was made in assessing eligibility or calculating an award.
- Relevant personal or financial information was not fully considered.
- A student's circumstances have changed significantly since the application was submitted.

Procedure

1. Informal Resolution

In the first instance, students are encouraged to speak with the Bursary Support Administrator to seek clarification or discuss any concerns. This informal step often resolves most queries.

2. Formal Appeal Submission

If concerns remain, a formal written appeal should be submitted to the **Business and Finance Manager** within **10 working days** of receiving the decision. The appeal must clearly state the grounds and include any supporting evidence.

3. Appeal Review

The appeal will be considered by the business and finance manager or a senior manager, excluding any staff involved in the original decision. A written response will normally be issued within **15 working days** of receiving the appeal.

4. Final Decision

The outcome of the appeal will be final. There is no further right of appeal within the College.

Additional Information

- During the appeal process, existing bursary payments may be paused but not withdrawn.
- Students can seek advice and support from their Personal Tutor or Student Services when preparing an appeal.