1. **POLICY STATEMENT**

The 16-19 Student Financial Support (Bursary) Fund is provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 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 Student Financial Support (Bursary) awards and the validity of its assessment of qualifying criteria and has effective procedures for resolving appeals.

This policy sets out the financial support available through, and eligibility for, bursary funding for 16-19 year old students enrolled at Works 4 U Independent Specialist Institution.

The 16-19 Student Financial Support (Bursary) funds are managed by the College and are allocated on a first come first served basis via a paper application and assessment process. Applicants will be notified of their application outcome.

**16 to 19 Bursary Fund and receipt of DWP benefits**

Receipt of bursary funding does not affect receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as Income Support, Jobseeker’s Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or, generally, Universal Credit (the Universal Credit section of this document contains more detail about this benefit).

If a student is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) and Employment Support Allowance, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

**Works 4 U will not make bursary fund payments as regular payments for living costs. This is out of scope of the bursary fund and any such payments would be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000.**

The rules within this policy 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 ESFA may make.

1) There are two types of 16 to 19 bursary, Discretionary and Vulnerable:

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:

1. Be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2024 or 19 or over and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).
2. Meet the residency criteria in ESFA funding regulation for post-16 provision in the 2024 to 2025 academic year.
3. 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 ESFA or by ESFA 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 the student’s gross annual household income must be below £30,000.

v. Students with a gross annual household income of more than £30,000 can 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 college and/or work placement. Google maps are used to assess distance.

• A curriculum based field trip must be undertaken in order to gain a qualification.

b) **Vulnerable Bursary** Vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups. To be eligible for the vulnerable 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 maximum bursary is £1200 for those most at risk.

vii. Pro rata awards may 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.

***Please note, Works 4 U 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. Institutions can refuse a student’s application on this basis.***

***Similarly, students should only receive the amount they actually need to participate and institutions should not automatically award students £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.***

2) **Not Eligible**

1. Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are employed, rather than in education. They are not eligible for help from the Vulnerable or Discretionary Bursary Fund or Free College Meals.
2. ii. Students who are aged 19 and over on 31 August 2024 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:

• 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 Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

• Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit. • Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa.

ii. The food allowance will be made available to students aged between 16 and 19 years old (as at 31 August 2024). 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.

4) **Payments**

a) Payment will be made direct into the student’s bank account via the BACS system. Only in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account will a payment be made into another person’s account.

iii) Where the award is for travel for students seeking asylum a weekly bus pass will be issued.

iv) If a student is withdrawn within the first six weeks of their course we will attempt to reclaim all monies paid and/or ask for kit and uniform that has been paid in kind to be returned to us.

v) Payments will be made to credit student accounts on Mondays. In the case of a bank holiday payments will be made to credit student accounts on Tuesdays.

b) **Equipment, Uniforms and Books**

i) If any equipment, uniforms or books etc have been identified as required to enhance and support a students’ study programme, this will be agreed between the college and the student and the college will purchase the equipment on behalf of the student and keep relevant documentation for auditing purposes.

ii. If the college purchases books or equipment for a student, they can specify the student must return these at the end of their study programme so they can be used again by another student where appropriate. So, if Works 4 U purchases equipment that is necessary for the student to complete their study programme, they can purchase this with bursary funds and specify the student must return it once they have completed their study programme. If keeping equipment on site is the best way of ensuring this happens, the college have the right to set this as a condition.

c) **Educational Trips**

i) The college may use part of a students’ bursary award to fund a particular trip. You will be notified in advance by writing of any monies used to fund an educational trip.

5) **Attendance Criteria**

i. The college reserves the right to withhold bursary payments where a student does not comply with the agreed standards of their study programme, however, students’ individual circumstances will be taken into consideration

ii. The college will stop payments where a student has been absent for 4 weeks or more and where students have made the decision to withdrawn from their study programme

6) **Appeals Process**

i. Appeals can be made in writing to the Director within 14 days of notification of a decision. All Appeals will receive a response within 10 days of receipt. All decisions on Appeal are final

2. **POLICY CONTEXT**

This policy applies to all 16-19 year old students enrolled at Works 4 U and sets out the financial support available through, and eligibility for, Student Financial Support (Bursary) funding

3. **LOCATION AND ACCESS TO THE POLICY**

The 16-19 Student Financial Support (Bursary) Fund Policy 2024-25 is available on our website [www.works4u.org.uk](http://www.works4u.org.uk)