

BHASVIC

STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT POLICY

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STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. BHASVIC receives 16-19 Bursary funds, including Free College Meals, from the Education Funding and Skills Agency (EFSA). This money is paid to us so that we may provide financial help to students whose access to, or participation in, education would otherwise be inhibited due to financial constraints.
- 1.2. BHASVIC is committed to helping students overcome financial barriers by ensuring that students, parents/carers and relevant external agencies have access to high quality information and advice regarding the financial support we offer. BHASVIC also recognises the importance of administering funds in line with national guidance and in a fair and transparent manner.

2. Policy Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all 'home'¹ students who are studying day-time courses at the college which are funded by the EFSA.
- 2.2. This policy and the financial support funds outlined within it do not apply to students who are taking evening courses at the college, or courses which are not funded by the EFSA.
- 2.3. The college does not receive any funding for students who are aged 19 or over on the 31st August immediately preceding the start of the academic year. A student aged 19+ would only be eligible to apply for financial support if they are completing a learning programme started whilst they were aged under 19 at the start of their first year of study, or they have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).
- 2.4. All students accessing financial support must meet the eligibility criteria set out in the latest EFSA 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide, and should be participating in provision which is funded by the EFSA and is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality.
- 2.5. The funds we receive are made up of three elements:
 - 2.5.1. The Vulnerable Bursary - eligibility criteria determined by the EFSA.
 - 2.5.2. Discretionary Bursaries - eligibility criteria determined by college in line with guidance from the EFSA.
 - 2.5.3. Free College Meals – eligibility determined by the ESFA.
- 2.6. Whilst all students who wish to study at BHASVIC may refer to this policy, only those in the eligible groups will be eligible to apply for financial support. Further information regarding eligibility is available from the Student Support department.
- 2.7. The college will ring-fence a small budget from central college funds to be used for students outside the eligibility criteria for Bursary but who are experiencing financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances or crises. Use of this fund falls outside the scope of this policy. Further information is available from Student Support.
- 2.8. The college will support relevant students to access a small selection of external awards such as Helena Kennedy and The Old Boys' War Memorial Scholarship Fund. These, and other external funds, fall outside the scope of this policy. Further information is available from Student Support.

¹ Publicly funded educational institutions can charge two levels of fee: the lower 'home' fee and the higher 'overseas' fee. Whether a student pays the 'home' or 'overseas' fee depends on whether they meet certain criteria e.g. country of birth, length of time in the UK, country of residence, immigration status.

3. Policy Aims

- 3.1. To ensure that Bursary Funds are allocated and administered in accordance with EFSA guidelines and policies.
- 3.2. To work in partnership with other local providers to ensure financial support policies are not designed to give any post-16 provider a competitive advantage over other providers. A financial support policy should not influence the choices students are making in regard to their post-16 options.
- 3.3. To explain the roles and responsibilities of staff.
- 3.4. To describe the guiding principles for how financial support is allocated and the eligibility criteria students must meet.
- 3.5. To explain the procedure for dealing with any appeals or complaints in relation to financial support.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1. **The Governing Body** is responsible for ensuring that the college has appropriate policies and procedures in place for the distribution of Bursary funds.
- 4.2. **The Principal** has responsibility for ensuring that these policies and procedures are fully implemented and is accountable for the college's use of the funds.
- 4.3. **The Head of Student Support** reports to the **Assistant Principal (Student Support, Experience & Guidance)** and is responsible for:
 - 4.3.1. Developing the policy, student guidelines, application forms and other supporting documentation which set out how the college will administer and distribute our funds
 - 4.3.2. Ensuring that the fund is publicised in a timely and appropriate manner to inform young people starting college in the following academic year. This includes ensuring the Admissions & Schools Liaison and Guidance Teams are all well informed
 - 4.3.3. Overseeing the administration of the fund
 - 4.3.4. Making decisions on allocation of funds in conjunction with the Centre Operations Coordinator
 - 4.3.5. Ensuring that audit requirements are met
 - 4.3.6. Acting as the first point of contact for any appeal or complaint in relation to the funds.
Any student or parent/carer who feels aggrieved about how their appeal or complaint in relation to financial support was handled, should follow the normal complaints procedure.
 - 4.3.7. Working in partnership with other local providers to develop common approaches to the administration of the Bursary
 - 4.3.8. Reporting on use of funds to the EFSA annually, or more frequently if instructed.
- 4.4. **The Centre Operations Coordinator** is responsible for:
 - 4.4.1. Assisting the Head of Student Support in publicising the fund, particularly with external agencies such as Social Services, Young Carers Project etc.
 - 4.4.2. Assisting students and/or parents/carers to make an appropriate application
 - 4.4.3. Ensuring application forms are completed and that documentary evidence is provided or confirmed where required
 - 4.4.4. Ensuring funding allocations are recorded accurately and supported with adequate documentation
 - 4.4.5. Ensuring the archiving of application documentation for a period of 6 years after the student leaves the college
 - 4.4.6. Instructing the Finance department regarding payments to students

4.5. **Students and their Parents or Carers** have a responsibility to:

- 4.5.1. Provide accurate and appropriate documentary evidence when making an application for financial support
- 4.5.2. Ensure compliance with the college's attendance and behaviour conditions to ensure receipt of any award allocated to them
- 4.5.3. Inform the Head of Student Support of any changes in their financial circumstances

5. Sources of financial support:

5.1. Bursary Fund (including Free College Meals)

- 5.1.1. The College receives an annual funding allocation for 16-19 Bursary support (including Free College Meals) and operates this fund and all associated processes and audit requirements in accordance with national guidelines from the Education Funding and Skills Agency. Full guidelines and an application form can be found here <https://www.bhasvic.ac.uk/student-life/our-support-service>
- 5.1.2. This fund is to help students with specific financial needs *which are related to their studies*.
- 5.1.3. All financial support offered to students from the 16-19 Bursary fund is dependent on the student meeting the required levels of attendance and behaviour during their time at the college. The requirements are set by the Head of Student Support in conjunction with the Centre Operations Coordinator and the Assistant Principal (Student Support & Experience).

5.3. Care to Learn

- 5.3.1. Students who are under the age of 20 before they start their course and who have children can apply for help with childcare costs through the 'Care to Learn' scheme.

5.4. The Hardship Fund

- 5.4.1. The college has limited access to other funds for students experiencing hardship. The Hardship Fund is primarily for those students experiencing unexpected hardship that could include loss of wallet/purse or sudden change in domestic circumstances. Re-payment of these funds is based on individual circumstances and is at the discretion of the Head of Student Support.

5.5. Old Boys War Memorial Scholarship Fund

- 5.5.1. This was set up after the First World War as a memorial to those Old Boys of the Brighton Hove & Sussex Grammar School who were killed in the war. Each year a sum of money is made available to students, usually £150 - £250, undertaking a task or venture that furthers their education, usually but not necessarily during their gap year. This fund is not means tested.

The fund is overseen by a group of trustees and the college has no authority in how this fund is used. The college will however support students to make an application to the Old Boys War Memorial Scholarship Fund and may submit a reference for the applicant which enhances their case. Further information and advice is available from the Head of Student Support and the Centre Operations Coordinator.

6. Monitoring and Reporting

- 6.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if any changes announced by the EFSA will have an impact on the way the college manages and administers the funds.
- 6.2. Any incident(s) related to the scope of this policy will be reported to the Corporation, whilst maintaining confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate.
- 6.3. The Bursary and Free College Meals funds are subject to internal audit and information will be provided by the Head of Student Support upon request from the Senior Management Team.
- 6.4. The college will comply with all external audit requirements and reporting cycles.

7. Related Documents

- 16-19 Bursary Fund Guidelines
- Annual Report & Financial Statements
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disability statement (Meeting your Needs)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Disclosure & Confidentiality Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Examination and Assessment Policy
- Student Behaviour Policy
- Student Charging Policy
- Student Fees & Charges Schedule