



Grow 19

**Bursary Fund
and
Free Meals Policy**

Key Contact Personnel in College

**Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:
Matthew Jones**

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Matthew Jones

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Debbie Pardey

Date written: November 2025

Date of next review: November 2026

This policy will be reviewed following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.

Grow 19 Bursary Fund and Free Meals Policy

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

The funding can help eligible students with essential costs of participating such as travel to and from school or college, lunch, or to buy essential books, equipment, or specialist clothing (protective overalls, for example) that are required for their individual study programme. These are items a student would otherwise need to pay for themselves to participate.

Eligibility Criteria for 16-19 Bursaries:

- a. All learners must have a valid Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place.
- b. Grow 19 is only open to learners between 18 and 25 yrs
- c. All learners must have the right to, and have been a resident in the UK for the past 3 years

Our young people may be entitled to two types of 16-19 bursaries;

1. Vulnerable Student Bursary
2. Discretionary Bursary

1. Vulnerable Student Bursary

The young person may be eligible to receive a bursary of up to £1,200 if at least 1 of the following applies:

- The young person is in, or recently left local authority care
- The young person is disabled and gets **Income Support** in their name
- The young person is disabled and gets **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)** and either **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)** or **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** in their name
- The young person is disabled and they get **Universal Credit** in their name in place of Income Support or ESA.

If a parent has applied on their behalf they will need to supply evidence of receipt of the relevant allowance(s), including current copies of the documentation above, and provide a brief statement of how the money will be spent.

2. Discretionary Bursary

The young person may get a discretionary bursary from our specialist college if they need financial help, but do not qualify for a Vulnerable Student Bursary, if they meet specific

criteria determined by Grow 19. Learners must submit a separate application for the Discretionary Bursary, providing necessary documentation and information. The amount of the Discretionary Bursary will be determined on a case-by-case basis, considering the learner's financial circumstances and the availability of funds.

Due to the nature of the learner's specific needs, it would be difficult to set a standard for behaviour and attainment that would be applicable to all our learners to qualify for this bursary. However, Grow 19 sets an expectation of attendance at 95% or above for all learners. An exception to this may be in circumstances where a learner's health and/or medical needs impact upon their attendance, in which case discretion would be exercised by the Head of Grow 19 College.

When the Discretionary Bursary Fund is exhausted, no further applications will be considered until further funding is received from the Department for Education.

Applying for a Discretionary Bursary:

To apply for a Discretionary Bursary, complete the form in Appendix 1 and supply the necessary evidence so that the College can consider the application. A meeting of the senior leadership team will be convened to consider your application, and usually a decision will be made within 2 weeks. The outcome of the decision will be advised in writing.

3. Free Meals

Grow 19 College review Government funded learner eligibility for Free Meals upon enrolment. This review includes the eligibility of any learners currently in receipt of free meals.

Eligibility Criteria for Free Meals:

Learners may be entitled to apply for Free Meals if they are;

- A student aged 16 or over but under 19 or
 - A student aged 19 or over if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- and**

Learners or 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 (after tax and not including any benefits they get)

Applying for Free Meals:

A learner is only eligible to receive a Free Meal when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, has made a successful application to Grow 19 College.

Please complete the form in Appendix 2 and supply the necessary evidence so that the College can consider the application. For application received upon enrolment, a decision will be reached within the first 2 weeks of the academic year. This decision will be given in writing.

Impact on DWP Benefits:

- a. It is the learner's responsibility to inform the relevant government departments, such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), about their enrolment in the specialist college.
- b. Learners are advised to consult with the DWP or their designated benefits advisor to understand any potential impact on their benefits due to their enrolment in the specialist college.

Complaints/Appeals Process:

- a. Learners or their parents may submit a complaint informally in the first instance to the college administrator if they feel their bursary or free meals entitlement has been incorrectly handled.

- b. If this remains unresolved, learners or their parents may submit a complaint formally in writing to the college administrator, clearly outlining the nature of the complaint and any supporting evidence.
- c. The college will follow its established complaints procedure to investigate and respond to the complaint within a reasonable timeframe.
- d. If the learner is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they may request an appeal, which will be reviewed by an independent panel. The learner will be informed of the appeal process and any relevant deadlines.

This policy is linked to;

- The Education & Skills Funding Agency Funding Guidance for Young People 2025 to 2026
- 16-19 Bursary Fund guide 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Please see this guidance for more information.

This policy is subject to regular review and updates to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and guidance from the Department for Education and any other relevant governing bodies.

Appendix 1:

Discretionary Bursary Application Form for 2025-26 Academic Year

This form must be completed in full by, or on behalf of, the learner at Grow 19 College. The evidence required for Grow 19 College to be able to complete the application must be provided with this form.

Name of setting	Grow 19 College		
Full name			
Date of birth		Age	
Home address			

Discretionary Bursary Criteria. (Please circle as appropriate):

Do you have the right to live and have been resident in the UK for the last 3 years?	Yes	No
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Are you in receipt of free school meals?	Yes	No
Are you in receipt of Tax credits or Universal Credit?	Yes	No
Please give some information as to why you are applying for a discretionary bursary:		

By signing this form you are agreeing that:

- All the information on this form is correct to the best of your knowledge
- You will supply all evidence and information required to verify the application
- You will inform Grow 19 College of any changes to your circumstances
- You will abide by the attendance and behaviour policies at Grow 19 College
- You will pay back any funds immediately if the application is found to be false or deliberately misleading (false claims may be referred to the DFE or police)
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Signed	
Date	

Appendix 2:

Free Meals Application Form

This form must be completed in full by the named learner or parent/carer wanting to apply for free school meals.
The evidence required for Grow 19 College to be able to complete the application must be provided with this form.

Name of setting	Grow 19
Name of person applying	
I am the learner	I am the parent/carer
Home address	

Preferred supermarket for vouchers	
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Please tick which evidence you have submitted with this application (please see guidance on next page):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Universal credit statement 1
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And

<input type="checkbox"/>	Universal credit statement list (3 months minimum)
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Or

<input type="checkbox"/>	Universal credit statement 2
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Universal credit statement 3
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Other evidence (not Universal Credit, please specify below):
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Signed	
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Date	
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